

T W E N T Y
O F T H E
P L A Y S
O F
S H A K E S P E A R E,

Being the whole Number printed in Quarto
During his LIFE-TIME, or before the RESTORATION,

Collated where there were different COPIES,

A N D

Publish'd from the ORIGINALS,

B Y

GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq;

I N F O U R V O L U M E S.

—ire jubeo, ut ea a fontibus potius hauriant, quam rivulos
confectentur. Quæ autem nemo adhuc docuerat, nec erat
unde studiosi scire possent, ea, quantum potui, feci, ut essent
nota nostris. CICERONIS ACAD. Lib. I.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. and R. TONSON, in the *Strand*; T. PAYNE,
at the *Mews-gate, Castle-street*; and W. RICHARDSON,
in *Fleet-street*.

M.DCC.LXVI.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

READER.

THE plays of SHAKESPEARE have been so often republished, with every seeming advantage which the joint labours of men of the first abilities could procure for them, that one would hardly imagine they could stand in need of any thing beyond the illustration of some few dark passages. Modes of expression must remain in obscurity, or be retrieved from time to time, as chance may throw the books of that age into the hands of critics who shall make a proper use of them. Many have been of opinion that his language will continue obscure to all those who are unacquainted with the provincial expressions which they suppose him to have used; but for my own part, I cannot believe but that those which are now local may once have been universal, and must have been the language of those persons before whom his plays were represented. However, it is certain that the instances of obscurity from this source are very few.

SOME

SOME have been of opinion that even a particular syntax prevailed in the time of SHAKESPEARE; but, as I do not recollect that any proofs were ever brought in support of that sentiment, I own I am of the contrary opinion.

IN his time indeed a different arrangement of syllables had been introduced in imitation of the Latin, as we find in ASCHAM; and the verb was very frequently kept back in the sentence; but in SHAKESPEARE no marks of it are discernible: and though the rules of syntax were more strictly observed by the writers of that age than they have been since, He of all the number is perhaps the most ungrammatical. To make his meaning intelligible to his audience seems to have been his only care, and with the ease of conversation he has adopted its incorrectness.

THE past editors, eminently qualified as they were by genius and learning for this undertaking, wanted industry; to cover which they published catalogues, transcribed at random, of a greater number of old copies than ever they can be supposed to have had in their possession; when, at the same time, they never examined the few which we know they had, with any great degree of accuracy. The last Editor alone has dealt fairly with the world in this particular; he professes to have made use of no more than he had really seen, and has annexed a list of such to every play, together with a complete one of those supposed to be in being, at the conclusion of his work,

whether

whether he had been able to procure them for the service of it or not.

FOR these reasons I thought it would not be unacceptable to the lovers of SHAKESPEARE to collate all the Quartos I could find, comparing one copy with the rest, where there were more than one of the same play ; and to multiply the chances of their being preserved, by collecting them into volumes, instead of leaving the few that have escaped, to share the fate of the rest, which was probably hastened by their remaining in the form of pamphlets, their use and value being equally unknown to those into whose hands they fell.

OF some I have printed more than one copy ; as there are many persons, who not contented with the possession of a finished picture of some great master, are desirous to procure the first sketch that was made for it, that they may have the pleasure of tracing the progress of the artist from the first light colouring to the finishing stroke. To such the earlier editions of KING JOHN, HENRY THE FIFTH, HENRY THE SIXTH, THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, and ROMEO AND JULIET, will, I apprehend, not be unwelcome ; since in these we may discern as much as will be found in the hasty outlines of the pencil, with a fair prospect of that perfection to which He brought every performance He took the pains to retouch.

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THE general character of the Quarto editions may more advantageously be taken from the words of Mr. POPE, than from any recommendation of my own.

“ THE folio edition (says he) in which all the
 “ plays we now receive as his were first collected,
 “ was published by two players, HEMINGES and CON-
 “ DELL, in 1623, seven years after his decease. They
 “ declare that all the other editions were stolen and
 “ surreptitious, and affirm theirs to be purged from
 “ the errors of the former. This is true as to the
 “ literal errors, and no other ; for in all respects else
 “ it is far worse than the quartos.

“ FIRST, because the additions of trifling and bombast passages are in this edition far more numerous.
 “ For whatever had been added since those quartos, by
 “ the actors, or had stolen from their mouths into the
 “ written parts, were from thence conveyed into the
 “ printed text, and all stand charged upon the author.
 “ He himself complained of this usage in HAMLET,
 “ where he wishes THOSE WHO PLAY THE CLOWNS
 “ WOULD SPEAK NO MORE THAN IS SET DOWN FOR THEM
 “ (Act. 3. Sc. 4.) But as a proof that he could not escape
 “ it, in the old editions of ROMEO AND JULIET, there
 “ is no hint of the mean conceits and ribaldries now
 “ to be found there. In others the scenes of the mobs,
 “ plebeians, and clowns are vastly shorter than at present ; and I have seen one in particular (which
 “ seems

“ seems to have belonged to the playhouse, by hav-
 “ ing the parts divided by lines, and the actors names
 “ in the margin) where several of those very passages
 “ were added in a written hand, which since are to be
 “ found in the folio.

“ IN the next place, a number of beautiful passages
 “ were omitted which were extant in the first single
 “ editions ; as it seems without any other reason than
 “ their willingness to shorten some scenes.”

To this I must add, that I cannot help looking on the Folio as having suffered other injuries from the licentious alteration of the players ; as we frequently find in it an unusual word changed into one more popular ; sometimes to the weakening the sense, which rather seems to have been their work, who knew that plainness was necessary for the audience of an illiterate age, than that it was done by the consent of the author : for he would hardly have unnerved a line in his written copy, which they pretend to have transcribed, however he might have permitted many to have been familiarized in the representation. Were I to indulge my own private conjecture, I should suppose that his blotted manuscripts were read over by one to another among those who were appointed to transcribe them ; and hence it might easily happen, that words of similar sounds, though of senses directly opposite, might be confounded with each other. They themselves declare that SHAKESPEARE'S time of blotting was

past, and yet half the errors we find in their edition could not be merely typographical. Many of the Quarto's (as our own printers assure me) were far from being unskilfully executed, and some of them were much more correctly printed than the Folio, which was published at the charge of the same proprietors, whose names we find prefixed to the older copies: and I cannot join with Mr. POPE in acquitting that edition of more literal errors than those which went before it. The particles in it seem to be as fortuitously disposed, and proper names as frequently undistinguished by Italic or capital letters from the rest of the text. The punctuation is equally accidental; nor do I see on the whole any greater marks of a skilful revisal, or the advantage of being printed from unblotted originals in the one, than in the other. One reformation indeed there seems to have been made, and that very laudable; I mean the substitution of more general terms for a name too often unnecessarily invoked on the stage; but no jot of obscenity is omitted: and their caution against prophaneness is, in my opinion, the only thing for which we are indebted to the judgment of the editors of the Folio.

How much may be done by the assistance of the old copies will now be easily known; but a more difficult task remains behind, which calls for other abilities than are requisite in the laborious collator.

FROM a diligent perusal of the comedies of contemporary authors, I am persuaded that the meaning of
many

many expressions in SHAKESPEARE might be retrieved ; for the language of conversation can only be expected to be preserved in works, which in their time assumed the merit of being pictures of men and manners. The stile of conversation we may suppose to be as much altered as that of books ; and in consequence of the change we have no other authorities to recur to in either case. Should our language ever be recalled to a strict examination, and the fashion become general of striving to maintain our old acquisitions instead of gaining new ones, which we shall be at last obliged to give up, or be incumbered with their weight ; it will then be lamented that no regular collection was ever formed of the old ENGLISH books ; from which, as from antient repositories, we might recover words and phrases as often as caprice or wantonness should call for variety ; instead of thinking it necessary to adopt new ones, or barter solid strength for feeble splendor, which no language has long admitted, and retained its purity.

WE wonder that before the time of SHAKESPEARE, we find the stage in a state so barren of productions, but forget that we have hardly any acquaintance with the authors of that period, though some few of their dramatic pieces may remain. The same might be almost said of the interval between that age and the age of DRYDEN, the performances of which, not being preserved in sets, or diffused as now, by the greater number printed, must lapse apace into the same obscurity.

Vixere fortes ante AGAMEMNONA
Multi——

and yet we are contented from a few specimens only to form our opinions of the genius of ages gone before us. Even while we are blaming the taste of that audience which received with applause the worst plays in the reign of CHARLES the second, we should consider that the few in possession of our theatre, which would never have been heard a second time had they been written now, were probably the best of hundreds which had been dismissed with general censure. The collection of plays, interludes, &c. made by Mr. GARRICK, with an intent to deposit them hereafter in some public library, will be considered as a valuable acquisition; for pamphlets have never yet been examined with a proper regard to posterity. Most of the obsolete pieces will be found on enquiry to have been introduced into libraries but some few years since; and yet those of the present age, which may one time or other prove as useful, are still entirely neglected. I should be remiss, I am sure, were I to forget my acknowledgments to the Gentleman I have just mentioned, to whose benevolence I owe the use of several of the scarcest Quarto's, which I could not otherwise have obtained; though I advertised for them, with sufficient offers, as I thought, either to tempt the casual owner to sell, or the curious to communicate them; but Mr. GARRICK's zeal would not permit him to withhold any thing that might ever so remotely tend to shew the perfections of that author who could only have enabled him to display his own.

IT

It is not merely to obtain justice to SHAKESPEARE, that I have made this collection, and advise others to be made. The general interest of ENGLISH literature, and the attention due to our own language and history, require that our ancient writings should be diligently reviewed. There is no age which has not produced some works that deserved to be remembered; and as words and phrases are only understood by comparing them in different places, the lower writers must be read for the explanation of the highest. No language can be ascertained and settled, but by deducing its words from their original sources, and tracing them through their successive varieties of signification; and this deduction can only be performed by consulting the earliest and intermediate authors.

ENOUGH has been already done to encourage us to do more. Dr. HICKES, by reviving the study of the SAXON language, seems to have excited a stronger curiosity after old ENGLISH writers, than ever had appeared before. Many volumes which were mouldering in dust have been collected; many authors which were forgotten have been revived; many laborious catalogues have been formed; and many judicious glossaries compiled: the literary transactions of the darker ages are now open to discovery; and the language in its intermediate gradations, from the Conquest to the Restoration, is better understood than in any former time.

To incite the continuance, and encourage the extension of this domestic curiosity, is one of the purposes of the present publication. In the plays it contains, the poet's first thoughts as well as words are preserved; the additions made in subsequent impressions, distinguished in italics, and the performances themselves make their appearance with every typographical error, such as they were before they fell into the hands of the player-editors. The various readings, which can only be attributed to chance, are set down among the rest, as I did not chuse arbitrarily to determine for others which were useless, or which were valuable. And many words differing only by the spelling, or serving merely to shew the difficulties which they to whose lot it first fell to disentangle their perplexities must have encountered, are exhibited with the rest. I must acknowledge that some few readings have slipped in by mistake, which can pretend to serve no purpose of illustration, but were introduced by confining myself to note the minutest variations of the copies, which soon convinced me that the oldest were in general the most correct. Though no proof can be given that the poet super-intended the publication of any one of these himself, yet we have little reason to suppose that he who wrote at the command of ELIZABETH, and under the patronage of SOUTHAMPTON, was so very negligent of his fame as to permit the most incompetent judges, such as the players were, to vary at their pleasure what he had set down for the first single editions; and we have better grounds for a suspicion that his works did materially suffer

suffer from their presumptuous corrections after his death.

IT is very well known, that before the time of SHAKESPEARE, the art of making title pages was practised with as much, or perhaps more success than it has been since. Accordingly, to all his plays we find long and descriptive ones, which when they were first published were of great service to the venders of them. Pamphlets of every kind were hawked about the streets, by a set of people resembling his own AUTOLYCUS, who proclaimed aloud the qualities of what they offered to sale, and might draw in many a purchaser by the mirth he was taught to expect from THE HUMOURS OF CORPORAL NYM, OR THE SWAGGERING VAIN OF AUNCIENT PISTOLL, who was not to be tempted by the representation of a fact merely historical. The players, however, laid aside the whole of this garniture, not finding it so necessary to procure success to a bulky volume, when the author's reputation was established, as it had been to bespeak attention to a few straggling pamphlets while it was yet uncertain.

THE sixteen plays which are not in these volumes, remained unpublished till the Folio in the year 1623, though the compiler of a work called THEATRICAL RECORDS, mentions different single editions of every one of them before that time. But as no one of the editors could ever meet with such, nor has any one else pretended to have seen them, I think myself at liberty to suppose the compiler supplied the defects of the

list out of his own imagination; since he must have had singular good fortune to have been possessed of two or three different copies of all, when neither editors nor collectors, in the course of near fifty years, have been able so much as to obtain the sight of one of the number.

AT the end of the last volume I have added a tragedy of KING LEIR, published before that of SHAKESPEARE, which it is not improbable he might have seen, as the father kneeling to the daughter, when she kneels to ask his blessing, is found in it; a circumstance two poets were not very likely to have hit on separately; and which seems borrowed by the latter with his usual judgment, it being the most natural passage in the old play; and is introduced in such a manner as to make it fairly his own. The ingenious editor of THE RELIQUES OF ANCIENT POETRY having never met with this play, and as it is not preserved in Mr. GARRICK's collection, I thought it a curiosity worthy the notice of the public.

I HAVE likewise reprinted SHAKESPEARE's SONNETS, from a copy published in 1609, by G. ELD, one of the printers of his plays; which added to the consideration that they made their appearance with his name, and in his life-time, seems to be no slender proof of their authenticity. The same evidence might operate in favour of several more plays which are omitted
here,

here, out of respect to the judgment of those who had omitted them before*.

It is to be wished, that some method of publication most favourable to the character of an author were once established; whether we are to send into the world all his works without distinction, or arbitrarily to leave out what may be thought a disgrace to him. The first editors, who rejected *PERICLES*, retained *TITUS ANDRONICUS*; and Mr. POPE, without any reason, named *THE WINTER'S TALE*, a play that bears the strongest marks of the hand of SHAKESPEARE, among those which he supposed to be spurious. Dr. WARBURTON has fixed a stigma on the three parts of *HENRY THE SIXTH*, and some others;

Inde *DOLABELLA est, atq; hinc ANTONIUS,*

and all have been willing to plunder SHAKESPEARE, or mix up A BREED OF BARREN METAL with his purest ore.

JOSHUA BARNES, the editor of *EURIPIDES*, thought every scrap of his author so sacred, that he has preserved with the name of one of his plays, the only remaining word of it. The same reason indeed might be given in his favour, which caused the preservation of that valuable trifyllable; which is, that it cannot be found in any other place in the GREEK language.

* Locrine,	1595.	Puritan,	1600.
Sir John Oldcastle,	1600.	Thomas Lord Cromwell,	1613.
London Prodgal,	1605.	Yorkshire Tragedy,	no date.
Pericles Prince of Tyre,	1609.		

But

But this does not seem to have been his only motive, as we find he has to the full as carefully published several detached and broken sentences, the gleanings from scholiasts, which have no claim to merit of that kind ; and yet the author's works might be reckoned by some to be incomplete without them. If then this duty is expected from every editor of a GREEK or ROMAN poet, why is not the same insisted on in respect of an ENGLISH classic ? But if the custom of preserving all, whether worthy of it or not, be MORE HONoured IN THE BREACH THAN THE OBSERVANCE, the suppression at least should not be considered as a fault. The publication of such things as SWIFT had written merely to raise a laugh among his friends, has added something to the bulk of his works, but very little to his character as a writer. The four volumes that came out since Dr. HAWKESWORTH's edition, not to look on them as a tax levied on the public (which I think one might without injustice) contain not more than sufficient to have made one of real value ; and there is a kind of dissingenuity, not to give it a harsher title, in exhibiting what the author never meant should see the light ; for no motive, but a fordid one, can betray the survivors to make that public, which they themselves must be of opinion will be unfavourable to the memory of the dead.

LIFE does not often receive good unmixed with evil. The benefits of the art of printing are depraved by the facility with which scandal may be diffused,

diffused, and secrets revealed; and by the temptation by which traffic solicits avarice to betray the weaknesses of passion, or the confidence of friendship.

I CANNOT forbear to think these posthumous publications injurious to society. A man conscious of literary reputation will grow in time afraid to write with tenderness to his sister, or with fondness to his child; or to remit on the slightest occasion, or most pressing exigence, the rigour of critical choice, and grammatical severity. That esteem which preserves his letters, will at last produce his disgrace; when that which he wrote only to his friend or his daughter shall be laid open to the public.

THERE is perhaps sufficient evidence, that the plays in question, unequal as they may be to the rest, were written by SHAKESPEARE; but the reason generally given for publishing the less correct pieces of an author, that it affords a more impartial view of a man's talents or way of thinking, than when we only see him in form, and prepared for our reception, is not enough to condemn an editor who thinks and practises otherwise. For what is all this to shew, but that every man is more dull at one time than another; a fact which the world would have easily admitted, without asking any proofs in its support that might be destructive to an author's reputation.

To conclude; if the work which this publication was meant to facilitate, has been already performed,
the

the satisfaction of knowing it to be so, may be obtained from hence ; if otherwise, let those who raised expectations of correctness, and through negligence defeated them, be justly exposed by future editors, who will now be in possession of by far the greatest part of what they might have enquired after for years to no purpose ; for in respect of such a number of the old Quarto's as are here exhibited, the first Folio is a common book. This advantage will at least arise, that future editors having equally recourse to the same copies, can challenge distinction and preference only by genius, capacity, industry, and learning.

As I have only collected materials for future artists, I consider what I have been doing as no more than an apparatus for their use. If the public is inclined to receive it as such, I am amply rewarded for my trouble ; if otherwise, I shall submit with cheerfulness to the censure which should equitably fall on an injudicious attempt ; having this consolation, however, that my design amounted to no more than a desire to encourage others to think of preserving the oldest editions of the ENGLISH writers, which are growing scarcer every day ; and to afford the world all the assistance or pleasure it can receive from the most authentic copies extant of its NOBLEST POET.

A LIST OF THE
OLD EDITIONS
OF
SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS.

Those in Quarto marked with Afterisks are in no former tables. I know no one who has seen those in the *Italic Characters*, but find them in Mr. *Pope's* and Mr. *Theobald's* Lists, and in Dr. *Warburton's*, which is compiled from them.

- I. { 1. Midsummer Night's Dream, William Shakespeare, 1600.
2. Do. William Shakespeare, 1600, James Roberts.
- II. { 1. Merry Wives of Windsor, William Shakespeare, 1602. T. C. for Arthur Johnson.
2. Do. William Shakespeare, 1619, for Do.
3. Do. William Shakespeare, 1630, T. H. for R. Meighen.
- III. { Much ado about Nothing, William Shakespeare, 1600, V. S. for Andrew Wise and William Aspley.
- IV. { 1. Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare, 1600. J. K. for Thomas Heyes.
2. W. Shakespeare, 1600, T. Roberts.
3. D°. William Shakespeare, 1637, M. P. for Laurence Hayes.
4. D°. William Shakespeare, 1652, for William Leake.

1. Love's

- V. { 1. *Loves Labour lost*, William Shakespear, 1598,
W. W. for Cuthbert Burley.
2. D°. William Shakespeare, 1631, W. S. for John
Smethwicke.
- VI. { 1. *Taming of the Shrew*, 1607, V. S. for Nich. Ling.
2. D°. Will. Shakespeare, 1631, W. S. for John
Smethwicke.
- VII. * { 1. *King Lear*, William Shakespeare, 1608, for Na-
thaniel Butter.
2. D°. William Shakespeare, 1608, for D°.
3. D°. William Shakespeare, 1655, Jane Bell.
- VIII. { 1. *King John*, 2 parts, 1591, for Sampson Clarke.
2. D°. W. Sh. 1611, Valentine Simmes, for John
Helme.
3. D°. W. Shakespeare, 1622, Aug. Mathewes, for
Thomas Dewe.
- IX. { 1. *Richard II.* William Shakespeare, 1598, Valen-
tine Simmes, for Andrew Wife.
2. D°. W. Shakespeare, 1608, W. W. for Mathew
Law.
3. D°. William Shakespeare, 1615, for Mathew Law.
4. D°. William Shakespeare, 1634, John Norton.
- * { 1. *Henry IV. First Part*, 1598, P. S. for Andrew
Wife.
2. D°. W. Shakespeare, 1599, S. S. for D°.
3. D°. 1604.
* 4. D°. 1608. for Mathew Law.
- X. { 5. D°. W. Shakespeare, 1613, W. W. for D°.
6. D°. William Shakespeare, 1622, T. P. fold
by D°.
* 7. D°. William Shakespeare, 1632, John Norton,
fold by William Sheares.
8. D°. William Shakespeare, 1639, John Norton,
fold by Hugh Perry.
- XI. { *Henry IV. Second Part*, William Shakespeare,
1600, V. S. for Andrew Wife and William
Aspley.
D°. 1600 D°. 1. *Henry*

- XII. * { 1. *Henry V.* 1600. *Tho. Crede, for Tho. Millington.*
 2. D°. 1602, Thomas Crede, for Thomas Pavier.
 3. D° 1608, for T. P.

- XIII. XIV. { 1. *Henry VI. William Shakespeare, 1600 W. W. for Tho. Millington.*
 2. D°. William Shakespeare, no date, for T. P.

- XV. { 1. Richard III. 1597, Valentine Simmes, for Andrew Wife.
 2. D°. William Shakespeare, 1598, Thomas Crede, for D°.
 3. D°. William Shakespeare, 1602, Thomas, &c. for D°.
 4. D°. William Shakespeare, 1612, Thomas Crede, fold by Matthew Lawe.
 5. D°. William Shakespeare, 1624, Thomas Purfoot, fold by D°.
 6. D°. William Shakespeare, 1629, John Norton, fold by D°.
 7. D°. William Shakespeare, 1634, John Norton.

- XVI. Titus Andronicus, 1611, for Edward White.

- XVII. { 1. Troilus and Cressida, William Shakespeare, 1609, G. Eld, for R. Bonian and H. Walley, with a Preface.
 2. D°. 1609, for D°.
 * 3. Do. no date, Do.

- XVIII. * { 1. Romeo and Juliet, 1597, John Danter.
 2. D°. 1599, *Tho. Crede, for Cuthbert Burley.*
 * 3. D°. 1609, for John Smethwicke.
 4. D°. William Shakespeare, no date, John Smethwicke.
 5. D°. William Shakespeare, 1637, R. Young, for D°.

I. Hamlet,

- XIX. * {
1. Hamlet, William Shakespeare, 1605, I. R. for N. L.
 2. D^o. William Shakespeare, 1611, for John Smethwicke.
 3. D^o. William Shakespeare, no date, W. S. for D^o.
 4. D^o. William Shakespeare, 1637, R. Young, for D^o.

- XX. {
1. *Othello, William Shakespeare, no date, Thomas Walkely.*
 2. D^o. William Shakespeare, 1622, N. O. for Thomas Walkely.
 3. D^o. William Shakespeare, 1630, A. M. for Richard Hawkins.
 4. D^o. William Shakespeare, 1655, for William Leake.

☞ Of all the other plays, the only authentick edition is the folio of 1623, from which the subsequent folios never vary but by accident or negligence.

A

Midfommer Nights Dreame.

As it hath beene fundry Times publikely acted,

By the Right Honourable, the LORD
CHAMBERLAINE his Seruants.

WRITTEN BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.



Printed by JAMES ROBERTS, 1600.

 This Copy has been collated with another printed in the same Year by *Thomas Fisher*, and the various Readings are shewn at the Bottom of the Page. These are the only Editions of this Play known to be extant before the Folio in 1623.

A

Midfommer Nights Dreame.

Enter Theseus, Hippolita, with others.

Theseus.

NOW faire *Hippolita*, our nuptiall houre
Drawes on apace : foure happy daies bring in
Another moone : but oh, me-thinks, how slow
This old moone wanes : she lingers my desires
Like to a step-dam, or a dowager,
Long withering out a young mans reuenew.

Hip. Foure daies will quickly steepe themselues in nights
Foure daies will quickly dreame away the time :
And then the moone, like to a siluer bow,
Now bent in heauen, shall behold the night
Of our solemnitie.

The. Goe *Philostrate*,
Stirre vp the *Athenian* youth to merriments,
Awake the peart and nimble spirit of mirth,
Turne melancholy foorth to funerals :
The pale companion is not for our pompe.
Hippolita, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And wonne thy loue, doing thee iniuries :
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pompe, with triumph, and with reuelling.

A 2

Enter

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

*Enter Egeus and his daughter Hermia, and Lyfander,
Helena, and Demetrius.*

Ege. Happy be *Theseus*, our renowned duke.

The. Thanks good *Egeus*. What's the newes with thee?

Ege. Full of vexation, come I, with complaint
Against my childe, my daughter *Hermia*.

Stand forth Demetrius.

My noble lord,

This man hath my consent to marry her.

Stand forth Lyfander.

And my gracious duke,

This man hath bewicht the bosome of my childe :

Thou, thou *Lyfander*, thou hast giuen her rimes,

And interchang'd loue tokens with my childe :

Thou hast by moone-light at her window fung,

With faining voice, verses of faining loue,

And stolne the impressiion of her fantasie,

With bracelets of thy haire, rings, gawdes, conceits,

Knacks, trifles, nose-gaies, sweet meates (messengers

Of strong preuailement in vnhardened youth)

With cunning hast thou filcht my daughters heart,

Turn'd her obedience (which is due to me)

To stubborne harshnesse. And my gracious duke,

Be it so she will not here before your grace,

Consent to marry with *Demetrius*,

I beg the ancient priuiledge of *Athens* ;

As she is mine, I may dispose of her ;

Which shall be either to this gentleman,

Or to her death, according to our law,

Immediatly prouided in that case.

The. What say you *Hermia* ? be aduis'd, faire maid,
To you your father shoud be as a God :

One that compos'd your beauties ; yea and one,

To whom you are but as a forme in wax

By him imprinted, and within his power,

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

To leaue the figure, or disfigure it :

Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

Her. So is *Lyfander*.

The. In himselfe he is.

But in this kinde, wanting your fathers voyce,

The other must be held the worthier.

Her. I would my father lookt but with my eyes.

The. Rather your eyes must with his iudgement looke.

Her. I do intreate your grace to pardon me.

I know not by what power I am made bold,

Nor how it may concerne my modesty,

In such a presence, here to plead my thoughts ;

But I beseech your grace, that I may know

The worst that may befall me in this case,

If I refuse to wed *Demetrius*.

The. Either to die the death, or to abiure
For euer the society of men.

Therefore faire *Hermia*, question your desires,

Know of your youth, examine well your blood,

Whether (if you yeeld not to your fathers choyce)

You can endure the liuery of a nunne,

For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd

To liue a barren sister all your life,

Chanting faint hymnes to the colde fruitlesse moone.

Thrice blessed they that master so their blood,

To vndergo such maiden pilgrimage,

But earthlier happy is the rose distild,

Than that which withering on the virgin thorne,

Growes, liues, and dies, in single blessednesse.

Her. So will I grow, so liue, so dye my lord,

Ere I will yeeld my virgin patent vp

Vnto his lordship, whose vnwished yoake

My soule consents not to giue fouerainty.

The. Take time to pause, and by the next new moone,

The sealing day betwixt my loue and me,

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

For euerlasting bond of fellowship :
Vpon that day either prepare to dye,
For disobedience to your fathers will,
Or else to wed *Demetrius*, as he wold,
Or on *Dianaes* altar to protest,
For aye, austerity, and single life.

Dem. Relent sweete *Hermia*, and *Lyfander*, yeeld
Thy crazed title to my certaine right.

Lyf. You haue her fathers loue, *Demetrius* :
Let me haue *Hermias* : do you marry him.

Egeus. Scornfull *Lyfander*, true, he hath my loue ;
And what is mine, my loue shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate vnto *Demetrius*.

Lyf. I am my lord, as well deriu'd as hee,
As well possesse : my loue is more than his :
My fortunes euery way as fairely ranckt
(If not with vantage) as *Demetrius* :
And (which is more than all these boasts can be)
I am belou'd of beautious *Hermia*.

Why should not I then prosecute my right ?
Demetrius, Ile auouch it to his head,
Made loue to *Nedars* daughter, *Helena*,
And won her soule : and she (sweete lady) dotes,
Deuoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Vpon this spotted and inconstant man.

The. I must confesse, that I haue heard so much,
And with *Demetrius*, thought to haue spoke thereof ;
But being ouer full of selfe-affaires,
My minde did * *lose it*. But *Demetrius* come,
And come *Egeus*, you shall go with me,
I haue some priuate schooling for you both.
For you faire *Hermia*, looke you are your selfe,

* *Lose it.*

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

To fit your fancies to your fathers will ;
Or else the law of *Athens* yeelds you vp
(Which by no meanes we may extenuate)
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come my *Hippolita* ; what cheare my loue ?
Demetrius and *Egeus* goe along :
I must imploy you in some businesse
Against our nuptiall, and conferre with you
Of something, neerely that concernes your selues.

Ege. With duty and desire, we follow you. *Exeunt,*

Lyf. How now my loue ? Why is your cheekes so pale ?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast ?

Her. Belike for want of raine ; which I could well
Beteeme them, from the tempest of my eyes.

Lyf. Eigh me ; for ought that I could euer reade,
Could euer heare by tale or history,
The course of true loue neuer did runne smoothe,
But either it was different in bloud ;

Her. O crosse ! too high to be inthralld to loue.

Lyf. Or else misgraffed, in respect of yeares ;

Her. O spight ! too olde, to be ingag'd to yong.

Lyf. Or else it stood vpon the choise of friends ;

Her. O hell, to choose loue by anothers eyes.

Lyf. Or, if there were a simpathy in choise,
Warre, death, or sicknesse, did lay siedge to it ;
Making it momentany, as a found ;
Swift as a shadow ; short as any dreame ;
Briefe as the lightening in the collied night,
That (in a spleene) vnfoldes both heauen and earth ;
And ere a man hath power to say, behold,
The iawes of darknesse do deuoure it vp :
So quicke bright things come to confusion.

Her. If then true louers haue bin euer crost,
It stands as an edict in destiny :

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Then let vs teach our triall patience,
Because it is a customary crosse,
As due to loue, as thoughts, and dreames, and fighes,
Wishes and teares ; poore fancies followers.

Lyf. A good perswasion : therefore heare me, *Hermia* :
I have a widow ant, a dowager,
Of great reueneue, and she hath no childe,
From *Athens* is her house remote feuen leagues,
And she respects me, as her onely sonne :
There gentle *Hermia*, may I marry thee,
And to that place, the sharpe *Athenian* law
Cannot pursue vs. If thou louest me, then
Steale forth thy fathers house, to morrow night :
And in the wood, a league without the towne
(Where I did meete thee once with *Helena*,
To do obseruance to a morne of *May*)
There will I stay for thee.

Her. My good *Lyfander*,
I sweare to thee, by *Cupids* strongest bow,
By his best arrow, with the golden head,
By the simplicity of *Venus* doves,
By that which knitteth foules, and prospers * loue,
And by that fire which burnd the *Carthage* queene,
When the false *Trojan* vnder sayle was seene,
By all the vowes that euer men haue broke,
(In number more then euer women spoke)
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To morrow truly will I meete with thee.

Lyf. Keepe promise loue, looke here comes *Helena*.

Enter Helena.

Her. God speede fair *Helena*, whither away ?

Hel. Call you me faire ? that faire againe vn fay,

* *Loues.*

Deme-

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Demetrius loues your faire : O happy faire !
 Your eyes are loadstars, and your tongues sweet ayre
 More tuneable then larke to shepheards eare,
 When wheate is greene, when hauthorne buds appeare,
 Sicknesse is catching : O were fauour so,
 Your words I catch, faire *Hermia* ere I goe,
 My eare should catch your voice, my eye, your eye,
 My tongue should catch your tongues sweet melody,
 Were the world mine, *Demetrius* being bated,
 The rest Ile giue to be to you translated.
 O teach me how you looke, and with what art,
 You sway the motion of *Demetrius* heart.

Her. I frowne vpon him, yet he loues me still.

Hel. O that your frowns wold teach my smiles such skil.

Her. I giue him curses, yet he giues me loue.

Hel. O that my prayers could such affection mooue.

Her. The more I hate, the more he followes me.

Hel. The more I loue, the more he hateth me.

Her. His folly, *Helena* * is none of mine.

Hel. None but your beauty, wold that fault were mine.

Her. Take comfort : he no more shall see my face,
Lyfander and my selfe will fly this place.
 Before the time I did *Lyfander* see,
 Seem'd *Athens* ‡ like a paradise to me.
 O then, what graces in my loue do dwell,
 That he hath turn'd a heauen † into hell.

Lyf. Helen, to you our mindes we will vnfold,
 To morrow night, when *Phæbe* doth behold
 Her siluer visage, in the watry glasse,
 Decking with liquid pearle, the bladed grasse
 (A time, that louers flights doth still conceale)
 Through *Athens* gates, haue we deuised to steale.

Her. And in the wood, where often you and I,
 Vpon faint primrose beds, were wont to lye,

* Is no fault. † As a. ‡ Unto a hell.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Emptying our bosomes, of their counsell sweld,
There my *Lyfander*, and my selfe shall meete,
And thence from *Athens* turne away our eyes
To seeke new friends and strange companions.
Farewell sweete play-fellow, pray thou for vs,
And good lucke grant thee thy *Demetrius*.
Keepe word *Lyfander* we must starue our sight,
From louers foode, till morrow deepe midnight. *Exit Hermia.*

Lyf. I will my *Hermia*. *Helena* adieu.

As you on him, *Demetrius* dote on you. *Exit Lyf.*

Hel. How happy some, ore other some can be?
Through *Athens* I am thought as faire as she.
But what of that? *Demetrius* thinkes not so:
He will not know, what all, but he do know,
And as he erres, doting on *Hermias* eyes;
So I, admiring of his qualities:
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Loue can transpose to forme and dignity,
Loue lookes not with the eyes, but with the minde,
And therefore is wingd *Cupid* painted blinde.
Nor hath loues minde of any iudgement taste:
Wings, and no eyes, figure, vnheedy haste.
And therefore is loue said to be a childe,
Because in choise he is so oft beguilde,
As waggish boyes in game themselues forswear;
So the boy Loue is periur'd euery where.
For ere *Demetrius* lookt on *Hermias* eyne,
He haild downe oathes that he was onely mine.
And when * *his* haile, some heate from *Hermia* felt,
So he dissolu'd, and showres of oathes did melt,
I will go tell him of faire *Hermias* flight:
Then to the wood will he, to morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence,
If I haue thanks, it is a deare expence:

* *This,*

But

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

But heerein meane I to enrich my paine,
To have his sight thither, and backe againe.

Exit.

Enter Quince the Carpenter, Snug the Ioyner, Bottome the Weauer, Flute the Bellows-mender, Snout the Tinker, and Starueling the Taylor.

Quin. Is all our company heere ?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrippe.

Quin. Here is the scrowle of euery mans name, which is thought fit through all *Athens*, to play in our enterlude, before the duke and the dutches, on his wedding day at night.

Bot. First good *Peter Quince*, say what the play treats on : then read the names of the actors : and so grow to a point.

Quin. Marry our play is the most lamentable comedy, and most cruell death of *Pyramus* and *Thisbie*.

Bot. A very good peece of worke, I assure you, and a merr-y. Now good *Peter Quince*, call foorth your actors by the scrowle. Masters spread your selues.

Quin. Answer as I call you. *Nick Bottome* the weauer.

Bot. Ready ; name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You *Nick Bottome* are set downe for *Pyramus*.

Bot. What is *Pyramus*, a loue, or a tyrant ?

Quin. A loue that kills himselfe most gallant, for loue.

Bot. That will aske some teares in the true perfourming of it, if I doe it, let the audience looke to their eyes : I will moue stormes ; I will condole in some measure. To the rest yet, my chiefe humour is for a tyrant. I could play *Ercles* rarely, or a part to teare a cat in, to make all split the raging rocks ; and shiuering shocks shall breake the locks of prison gates, and *Phibbus* carre shall shine from farre, and make and marre the foolish Fates. This was lofty. Now name the rest of the players. This is *Ercles* vaine, a tyrants vaine : a loue is more condoling.

Quin.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Quin. Francis Flute the bellows-mender.

Flu. Heere Peter Quince.

Quin. You must take *Thisby* on you.

Flu. What is *Thisby*? a wandring knight?

Quin. It is the lady that *Pyramus* must loue. (coming.

Flu. Nay faith, let not me play a woman, I haue a beard

Quin. That's al one, you shal play it in a maske, and you may speake as small as you will.

Bot. And I may hide my face, let me play *Thisby* to: Ile speake in a monstrous little voyce; *Thisne*, *Thisne*, ah *Pyramus* my louer deare, thy *Thisby* deare, and lady deare.

Quin. No no, you must play *Pyramus* and *Flute*, you *Thisby*.

Bot. Well, proceed.

Quin. Robin Starueling the tailor.

Star. Heere Peter Quince.

Quid. Robin Starueling, you must play *Thisbies* mother:
Tom Snowt, the tinker.

Snowt. Here Peter Quince.

Quin. You, *Pyramus* father; my selfe, *Thisbies* father;
Snugge the ioyner, you the lyons part: and I hope here is a play fitted.

Snug. Haue you the lyons part written? pray you if it be, giue it me, for I am slowe of study.

Quin. You may do it *extempore*, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lyon too, I will roare, that I will do any mans heart good to heare me. I will roare, that I will make the duke say, let him roare again, let him roare againe.

Quin. * If you should do it too terribly, you would fright the dutchesse and the ladies, that they should shriek, and that were enough to hang vs all.

All. That would hang vs euery mothers sonne.

Bot. I grant you friends, if you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would haue no more discretion but

* *An.*

to

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

to hang vs: but I will aggrauate my voyce so, that I will roare you as gently as any fucking doue; I will roare you and t'were any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but *Piramus*, for *Piramus* is a sweet fac't man, a proper man as one shal see in a sommers day; a most louely gentlemanlike man, therefore you must needs play *Piramus*.

Bot. Well, I will vndertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it, in eyther your straw-colour beard, your orange tawny beard, your purple in graine beard, or your french crowne colour beard, your perfit yellow.

Quin. Some of your french crownes haue no haire at all; and then you will play bare fac't. But masters heere are your parts, and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by too morrow night: and meete me in the palace wood, a mile without the towne, by moonelight, there we will rehearse: for if we meete in the citty, we shall be dogd with company, and our deuises knowne. In the meane tyme, I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you faile me not.

Bot. We will meete, and there we may rehearse § *moreob-*scenely and couragiously. Take paines, be perfit, adieu.

Quin. At the dukes oke we meete.

Bot. Enough, hold or cut bow-strings.

Exeunt.

Enter a Fairy at one doore, and Robin Good-fellow at another.

Robin. How now spirit, whether wander you?

Fai. Ouer hill, ouer dale, * *through* bush * *through* brier,
Ouer parke, ouer pale, * *through* flood, * *through* fire,
I do wander euery where, swifter then the moons sphere;
And I serue the Fairy Queen, to dew her orbes vpon the greene.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be,
In their gold coats, spots you see,

§ *Most.* * *Thorough.*

Those

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Those be rubies, fairy fauours,
In those freckles, liue their fauors,
I must go seeke some dew drops here,
And hang a pearle in euery cowslips eare.
Farwell thou lob of spirits, Ile be gone,
Our queene and all her elues come here anon,

Rob. The king doth keepe his revels heere to night,
Take heed the queene come not within his sight,
For *Oberon* is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A louely boy stollen from an *Indian* king,
She neuer had so sweete a changeling,
And ieaious *Oberon* would haue the childe,
Knight of his traine, to trace the forrests wilde.
But she, perforce with-holds the loued boy,
Crownes him with flowers, and makes him all her ioy.
And now they never meete in groue, or greene,
By fountaine cleere, or spangled starlight sheene,
But they do square, that all their elues for feare
Creepe into acorne cups, and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knauish spirit,
Call'd *Robin Good-fellow*. Are you not hee,
That frights the maidens of the villagree,
Skim milke, and sometimes labour in the querne,
And bootlesse make the breathlesse hufwife cherne,
And sometime make the drinke to beare no barme,
Mis-leade night-wanderers, laughing at their harme,
Those that hobgoblin call you, and sweete *Puck*,
You do their worke, and they shall haue good lucke.
Are not you he? (the night,

Rob. Thou speak'st aright; I am that merry wanderer of
I ieast to *Oberon*, and make him smile,
When I a fat and beane-fed horse beguile;

Neigh-

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Neighing in likenesse of a * *silly* foale,
And sometime lurke I in a gossip's bole,
In very likenesse of a roasted crab,
And when she drinckes, against her lips I bob,
And on her withered dewlop poure the ale.
The wisest aunt telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three foote stoole, mistaketh me,
Then slip I from her bum, downe topples she,
And tailour cries, and fals into a coffe,
And then the whole quire hold their hips, and losse,
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and sweare,
A merrier houre was neuer wasted there.
But roome Fairy, here comes *Oberon*,
Fai. And here my mistresse: would that he were gone.

*Enter the King of Fairies at one doore with his traine, and the
Queene at another with hers.*

Ob. Ill met by moone-light, proud *Tytania*.

Queene. What, iecalous *Oberon*? Fairy skip hence.
I haue forsworne his bed and company.

Ob. Tarry rash wanton; am not I thy lord?

Qu. Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stollen away from Fairy Land,
And in the shape of *Corin*, sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corne, and versing loue,
To amorous *Phillida*. Why art thou here
Come from the farthest steepe of *India*?
But that forsooth the bouncing *Amazon*,
Your buskind mistresse, and your warrior loue,
To *Theseus* must be wedded; and you come,
To giue their bed ioy and prosperity.

Ob. How canst thou thus for shame, *Tytania*,
Glance at my credite, with *Hippolita*?

* *Filly*.

Know-

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Knowing I know thy loue to *Theseus*.
Didst not thou leade him through the glimmering night,
From *Perigenia*, whom he rauished?
And make him with faire *Eagles* breake his faith
With *Ariadne*, and *Antiopa*?

Queene. These are the forgeries of iealousie,
And neuer since the middle sommers spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forrest or mead,
By pained fountaine, or by russhy brooke,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling winde,
But with thy brawles thou hast disturbd our sport.
Therefore the windes, pyping to vs in vaine,
As in reuenge, haue sucked vp from the sea,
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land,
Hath euery pelting riuer made so proud,
That they haue ouer-borne their continents.
The oxen hath therefore stretcht his yoke in vaine,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the greene corne
Hath rotted, ere his youth attained a beard:
The fold stands empty, in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flocks,
The nine mens morris is filld up with mud,
And the queint mazes in the wanton greene,
For lacke of tread, are vndistinguishable.
The humane mortals want their winter heere,
No night is now with hymme or carroll blest;
Therefore the moone (the gouernesse of floods)
Pale in her anger, washes all the aire;
That rheumaticke diseases do abound.
And * *through* this distemperature, we see
The seasons alter; † *hoared* headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,

* *Thorough*.

† *Hoary*.

And

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

And on old *Hyems* chinne and icie crowne,
An odorous chaplet of sweete sommer buds
Is as in mockery set. The spring, the sommer,
The childing autumnne, angry winter change
Their wonted lieries, and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which;
And this same progeny of euils,
Comes from our debate, from our dissention,
We are their parents and originall.

Oberon. Do you amend it then, it lyes in you,
Why should *Titania* crosse her *Oberon*?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

Queene. Set your heart at rest,
The Fairy Land buies not the childe of me,
His mother was a votresse of my order,
And in the spiced *Indian* aire, by night
Full often hath she gossippt by my side,
And sat with me on *Neptunes* yellow sands,
Marking th'embarked traders on the flood,
When we haue laught to see the failes conceine,
And grow big bellied with the wanton winde,
Which she with pretty and with swimming gate,
Following (her wombe then rich with my young squire)
Would imitate, and faile vpon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and returne againe,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandize.
But she being mortall, of that boy did dye,
And for her sake do I reare vp her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

Ob. How long within this wood intend you stay?

Queen. Perchance till after *Theseus* wedding day.
If you will patiently dance in our round,

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

And see our moone-light reuels, go with vs ;
If not, shun me and I will spare your haunts.

Ob. Giue me that boy, and I will go with thee.

Qu. Not for thy Fairie kingdome. Fairies away :
We shall chide downe right, if I longer stay. *Exeunt.*

Ob. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this groue,
Till I torment thee for this iniury.

My gentle *Pucke* come hither ; thou remembrest
Since once I sat vpon a promontory,
And heard a meare-maide on a dolphins backe,
Vttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew ciuill at her song,
And certaine starres shot madly from their spheares,
To heare the sea-maids musicke.

Puc. I remember.

Ob. That very time I *say (but thou couldst not)
Flying betweene the colde moone and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd ; a certaine aime he tooke
At a faire vestall, throned by West,
And loos'd his loue-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts,
But I might see young *Cupids* fiery shaft
Quencht in the chaste beames of the watry moone ;
And the imperiall votresse passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy free.
Yet markt I where the bolt of *Cupid* fel.
It fell vpon a little westerne flower ;
Before, milke-white ; now purple with loues wound,
And maidens call it, loue in idlenesse.
Fetch me that flower ; the hearb I shew'd thee once,
The iuyce of it, on sleeping eye-lids laide,
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Vpon the next liue creature that it sees.

* Saw.

Fetch

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.]

Fetch me this hearbe, and be thou here againe,
Ere the *Leuiathan* can swim a league.

Puc. Ile put a girdle * *about* the earth, in forty minutes,

Oberon. Hauing once this iuyce,
Ile watch *Titania*, whence she is asleepe,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes :
The next thing ‡ *when she* waking lookes vpon,
(Be it on lyon, beare, or wolfe, or bull,
On medling monkey, or on busie ape)
She shall pursue it, with the soule of loue.
And ere I take this charme off from her sight,
(As I can take it with another hearbe)
Ile make her render vp her page to me.
But who comes heere ? I am inuisible,
And I will ouer-heare their conference.

Enter Demetrius, Helena following him.

Dem. I loue thee not, therefore pursue me not,
Where is *Lyfander*, and faire *Hermia* ?
The one Ile stay, the other stayeth me.
Thou toldst me they were stolne vnto this wood ;
And here am I, and † *wood* within this wood,
Because I cannot meete my *Hermia*.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

Hel. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant,
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as Steele. Leauē you your power to draw,
And I shall haue no power to follow you.

Dem. Do I entice you ? do I speake you faire :
Or rather do I not in plainest truth,
Tell you I do not, nor I cannot love you ?

Hel. And euen for that do I loue § *thee* the more ;
I am your spaniell, and *Demetrius*,

* *Round about.* ‡ *Then she.* † *Woodde.* § *You.*

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

The more you beate me, I will fawne on you.
Vse me but as your spaniell ; spurne me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me ; onely giue me leaue
(Vnworthy as I am) to follow you.
What worfer place can I beg in your loue,
(And yet a place of high respect with me)
Then to be vsed as you vse your dog.

Dem. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit,
For I am sicke when I do looke on thee.

Hel. And I am sicke when I looke not on you.

Dem. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leaue the citty, and commit your selfe
Into the hands of one that loues you not,
To trust the opportunity of night,
And the ill counsell of a desert place,
With the rich worth of your virginity.

Hel. Your vertue is my priuiledge : for that
It is not night when I do see your face.
Therefore I thinke I am not in the night,
Nor doth this wood lacke worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world.
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to looke on me ?

Dem. Ile run from thee, and hide me in the brakes,
And leaue thee to the mercy of wilde beasts.

Hel. The wildest hath not such a heart as you ;
Runne when you will, the story shall be chaung'd :
Apollo flies, and *Daphna* holds the chase ;
The doue pursues the griffen, the milde hinde
Makes speed to catch the tygre. Bootlesse speede,
When cowardise pursues, and valor flies.

Dem. I will not stay thy questions, let me go ;
Or if thou follow me, do not beleeeue,
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

Hel.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Hel. I, in the temple, in the towne, * *and* field
You do me mischief. Fye *Demetrius*,
Your wrongs do set a scandall on my sex :
We cannot fight for loue, as men may do ;
We should be woo'd, and were not made to wooe.
Ile follow thee and make a heauen of hell,
To dye vpon the hand I loue so well.

Exit.

Ob. Fare thee well nymph, ere he do leaue this groue,
Thou shalt flye him, and he shall seeke thy loue.
Hast thou the flower there? Welcome wanderer.

Enter Pucke.

Puck. I, there it is.

Ob. I pray thee giue it me.

I know a banke where the wilde time blowes,
Where oxslips and the nodding violet growes,
Quite ouercanoped with lushious woodbine,
With sweete muske roses, and with eglantine ;
There sleepes *Tytania*, sometime of the night,
Luld in these flowers, with dances and delight :
And there the snake throwes her enammeld skinne,
Weed wide enough to † *rap* a fairy in.
And with the iuyce of this, Ile streake her eyes,
And make her full of hatefull fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seeke through this groue ;
A sweete *Athenian* lady is in loue
With a disdainefull youth : annoint his eyes,
But do it when the next thing he espies,
May be the lady. Thou shalt know the man,
By the *Athenian* garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prooue
More fond on her, then she vpon her loue ;
And looke thou meete me ere first the cocke crow.

Pu. Feare not my lord, your seruant shall do so. *Exeunt.*

* *Tbe* † *Wraspe.*

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Enter Queene of Fairies, with her traine.

Queen. Come, now a roundeli, and a fairy song;
Then for the third part of a minute hence,
Some to kill cankers in the muske rose buds,
Some warre with reremise, for their leathern wings,
To make my small elues coats, and some keepe back.
The clamorous owle, that nightly hootes and wonders
At out queint spirits: Sing me now asleepe,
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

Fairies sing.

*You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogges be not seene,
Newts and blinde wormes do no wrong
Come not neere our Fairy Queene.
Philomele with melody,
Sing in our sweett lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby,
Neuer harme, nor spell, nor charme,
Come our louely lady nye.
So good night with lullaby.*

*1. Fairy. Weauing spiders come not heere,
Hence you long legd spinders, hence:
Beetles blacke approch not neere;
Worme nor snayle do no offence.
Philomele with melody, &c.*

*2. Fairy. Hence away, now all is well;
One aloofe, stand centinell.*

Enter Oberon.

Ob. What thou see'st when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy thy true loue take:
Loue and languish for his fake.
Be it ounce, or catte, or beare,

Pard,

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Pard, or boare with bristled haire,
In thy eye that shall appeare,
When thou wak'st, it is thy deare,
Wake when some vile thing is neere.

Enter Lyfander and Hermia.

Lyf. Faire loue, you faint with wandring in the woods,
And to speake troth I haue forgot our way :
Wee'l rest vs *Hermia*, if you thinke it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

Her. Be it so *Lyfander* ; finde you out a bed,
For I vpon this banke will rest my head

Lyf. One turffe shall serue as pillow for vs both,
One heart, one bed, two bosomes, and one troth.

Her. Nay good *Lyfander*, for my sake my deare
Lie further off yet, do not lie so neere.

Lyf. O take the fence sweete, of my innocence,
Loue takes the meaning, in loues conference,
I meane that my heart vnto yours is knit,
So that but one heart we can make of it.
Two bosomes interchained with an oath,
So then two bosomes, and a single troth.
Then by your side, no bed-roome me deny,
For lying so, *Hermia*, I do not lye.

Her. *Lyfander* riddles very prettily ;
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If *Hermia* meant to say, *Lyfander* lied.
But gentle friend, for loue and courtesie
Lie further off, in humane modesty,
Such separation, as may well be said,
Becomes a vertuous batchellor, and a maide,
So farre be distant, and good night sweet friend ;
Thy loue nere alter till thy sweet life ende.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Lyf. Amen, amen, to that faire praier, say I,
And then end life, when I end loialty :
Heere is my bed, sleepe giue thee all his rest.
Her. With halfe that wish, the wishers eyes be prest.

Enter Pucke.

Puck. Through the Forrest haue I gone,
But *Athenian* finde I none,
On whose eies I might approue
This flowers force in stirring loue.
Night and silence: who is heere ?
Weedes of *Athens* he doth weare :
This is he (my master said)
Despised the *Athenian* maide :
And heere the maiden sleeping found,
On the danke and dirty ground.
Pretty soule, she durst not lye
Neere this lack-loue, this kill-curtisie.
Churle, vpon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charme doth owe :
When thou wak'st, let loue forbid
Sleepe his seate, on thy eye-lid.
So awake when I am gone :
For I must now to *Oberon*.

Exit.

Enter Demetrius and Helena running.

Hel. Stay, though thou kill me, sweete *Demetrius*.
Dem. I charge thee hence, and do not haunt me thus.
Hel. O wilt thou darkling leaue me? Do not so.
De. Stay on thy perill, I alone will goe.
Hel. O I am out of breath, in this fond chase,
The more my praier, the lesse is my grace.
Happy is *Hermia*, wheresoere she lies ;
For she hath blessed and attractiue eyes.

How

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

How came her eyes so bright ? Not with salt teares.

If so, my eies are oftner washt then hers.

No, no, I am as vgly as a beare ;

For beasts that meete me, runne away for feare,

Therefore no maruaile, though *Demetrius*

Do as a monster, flie my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling glasse of mine,

Made me compare with *Hermias* sphery eyne ?

But who is here, *Lyfander* on the ground ?

Dead or asleepe ? I see no blood, no wound,

Lyfander, if you liue, good sir awake.

Lyf. And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.

Transparant *Helena*, nature shewes arte,

That through thy bosome makes me see thy heart.

Where is *Demetrius* ? oh how fit a word

Is that vile name, to perish on my sword !

Hel. Do not say so *Lyfander*, say not so :

What though he loue your *Hermia* ? Lord, what though ?

Yet *Hermia* still loues you ; then be content.

Lyf. Content with *Hermia* ? No, I do repent

The tedious minutes I with her haue spent.

Not *Hermia*, but *Helena* * now I loue ;

Who will not change a rauens for a doue ?

The will of man is by his reason swai'd :

And reason saies you are the worthier maid.

Things growing are not ripe vntill their season ;

So 'I being young, till now ripe not to reason,

And touching now the point of humane skill,

Reason becomes the marshall to my will,

And leads me to your eyes, where I orelooke

Loues stories, written in loues richest booke.

Hel. Wherefore was I to this keene mockery borne ?

When at your hands did I deserue this scorne ?

* Now omitted.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Ist not enough, ist not enough, young man,
 That I did neuer, no nor neuer can,
 Deferue a sweete looke from *Demetrius* eye,
 But you must flout my insufficiency?
 Good troth you do me wrong (good-footh you do)
 In such disdainful manner, me to wooe.
 But fare you well; perforce I must confesse,
 I thought you lord of more true gentlenesse.
 Oh, that a lady of one man refvs'd,
 Should of another therefore be abus'd.

Exit.

Lyf. She sees not *Hermia* : *Hermia*, sleepe thou there,
 And neuer maist thou come *Lyfander* neere;
 For as a surfet of the sweetest things
 The deepest loathing to the stomacke brings;
 Or as the heresies that men do leaue,
 Are hated most of those they did deceiue:
 So thou, my surfet, and my heresie,
 Of all be hated; but the most of me;
 And all my powers addresse your loue and might,
 To honour *Helen*, and to be her knight.

Exit.

Her. Helpe me *Lyfander*, helpe me; do thy best
 To plucke this crawling serpent from my brest.
 Aye me, for pittie; what a dreame was here?
Lyfander looke, how I do quake with feare:
 Me-thought a serpent eate my heart away,
 And you sat smiling at his cruell prey.
Lyfander, what remoou'd? *Lyfander*, Lord,
 What, out of hearing, gone? No sound, no word?
 Alacke where are you? Speake and if you heare;
 Speake of all loues; I swound almost with feare.
 No, then I well perceiue you are not nye,
 Eyther death or you ile finde immediately.

Exit.

Enter the Clownes.

Bot. Are we all met?

Quin.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Quin. Pat, pat, and heres a maruailous conuenient place for our rehearfall. This greene plot shall be our stage, this hauthorne brake our tiring house, and we will doe it in action, as we will do it before the duke.

Bot. *Peter Quince?*

Peter. What faist thou, bully *Bottome*?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of *Piramus* and *Thisby*, that will neuer please. First, *Piramus* must draw a sword to kill himselfe; which the ladyes cannot abide. How answer you that?

Snout. Berlaken, a parlous feare.

Star. I beleeeue we must leaue the killing out, when all is done.

Bot. Not a whit, I haue a deuice to make all well. Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seeme to say, wee will do no harme with our swords, and that *Pyramus* is not kild indeed: and for the more better assurance, tell them that I *Piramus* am not *Piramus*, but *Bottome* the weauer; this will put them out of feare.

Quin. Well, we will haue such a prologue, and it shall be written in eight and fixe.

Bot. No, make it two more, let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lyon?

Star. I feare it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with your selfe, to bring in (God shield vs) a lyon among ladies, is a most dreadfull thing. For there is not a more fearefull wilde fowle then your lyon liuing: and we ought to looke to it.

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lyon.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and halfe his face must be seen through the lyons necke, and hee himselfe must speake through, saying thus, or to the same defect; Ladies,
or

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

or faire ladies, I would wish you, or I would request you, or I would entreat you not to feare, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hether as a lyon, it were pittie of my life. No, *I* am no such thing, *I* am a man as other men are; and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is *Snug* the ioyner.

Quin. Well, it shall be so; but there is two hard things, that is, to bring the moone-light into a chamber: for you know, *Piramus* and *Thisby* meete by moone-light.

Sn. Doth the moone shine that night we play our play?

Bottom. A calender, a calender, looke in the almanack, finde out moone-shine, find out moone-shine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why then may you leaue a casement of the great chamber window (where we play) open, and the moone may shine in at the casement.

Quin. I, or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorne, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present the person of moon-shine. Then there is another thing, we must haue a wall in the great chamber; for *Piramus* and *Thisby* (saies the story) did talke through the chinke of a wall.

Sn. You can neuer bring in a wall. What say you *Bottom*?

Bot. Some man or other must present wall, and let him haue some plaster, or some lome, or some rough cast about him, to signifie wall; or let him hold his fingers thus; and through that cranny, shall *Piramus* and *Thisby* whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit downe euery mothers sonne, and rehearse your parts. *Piramus*, you begin; when you haue spoken your speech, enter into that brake, and so euery one according to his cue.

Enter Robin.

Rob. What hempen home-spuns haue we swaggering here,
So neere the cradle of the Fairy Queene?

What,

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

What, a play toward? Ile be an auditor,
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. Speake *Piramus*, *Thisby* stand forth.

Pir. *Thisby*, the flowers of odious fauours sweete.

Quin. Odours, odorous.

Pir. Odours fauours sweete,

So hath thy breath, my dearest *Thisby* deare.

But harke, a voyce: stay thou but heere a while,

And by and by I will to thee appeare.

Exit.

Quin. A stranger *Piramus*, then ere plaid here.

This. Must I speake now?

Pet. I marry must you. For you must vnderstand he goes
but to see a noyse that he heard, and is to come againe.

This. Most radiant *Piramus*, most lilly white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant bryer,
Most brisk iuuenall, and eke most louely Iew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would neuer tyre,
Ile meete thee *Piramus*, at *Ninnies* toombe.

Pet. *Ninus* toombe man: why you must not speake that
yet; that you answer to *Piramus*: you speake all your part
at once, cues and al. *Piramus* enter, your cue is past; it is
neuer tyre.

This. O, as true as truest horse, that yet would neuer tyre.

Pir. If I were faire, *Thisby* I were onely thine.

Pet. O monstrous. O strange. We are haunted; pray
masters flye masters, helpe.

Rob. Ile follow you, Ile leade you about a round,
Through bogge, through bush, through brake, through bryer
Sometime a horse Ile be, sometime a hound,
A hogge, a headlesse beare, sometime a fire,
And neigh, and barke, and grunt, and rore, and burne,
Like horse, hound, hog, beare, fire, at euery turne. *Exit.*

Bot. Why do they run away? This is a knauery of them
to make me afeard.

Enter

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Enter Snowt.

Sn. O *Bottom*, thou art chang'd ; what do I see on thee ?

Bot. What do you see ? you see an asse head of your own.
Do you ?

Enter Peter Quince.

Pet. Blesse thee *Bottom*, blesse thee ; thou art translated. *Exit.*

Bot. I see their knauery ; this is to make an asse of me, to fright me if they could ; but I will not stir from this place, do what they can. I will walke vp and downe heere, and I will sing that they shall heare I am not afraid.

The woofell cocke, so blacke of hew,
With orange tawny bill,
The throstle, with his note so true,
The wren with little quill.

Tytania. What angell wakes me from my flowry bed ?

Bot. The finch, the sparrow, and the larke,
The plainfong cuckow gray ;
Whose note full many a man doth marke,
And dares not answer, nay.
For indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird ?
Who would giue a bird the lye, though he cry cuckow, neuer so ?

Tyta. I pray thee gentle mortall, sing againe,
Mine eare is much enamored of thy note ;

* *On the first view to say, to sweare I loue thee.*

So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape,

And thy faire vertues force (perforce) doth moue me.

Bot. Me-thinks mistresse, you should haue little reason for that : and yet to say the truth, reason and loue keepe little company together, now a dayes. The more the pittie, that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay I can gleeke vpon occasion.

* *So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape,*

And thy faire vertues force (perforce) doth moue me,

On the first view to say, to sweare I loue thee.

Tyta.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Tyta. Thou art as wise, as thou art beautifull.

Bot. Not so neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I haue enough to serue mine owne turne.

Tyta. Out of this wood, do not desire to goe,
Thou shalt remaine here, whether thou wilt or no.

I am a spirit of no common rate:

The sommer still doth tend vpon my state,

And I do loue thee; therefore go with me,

Ile giue thee fairies to attend on thee;

And they shall fetch thee iewels from the deepe,

And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleepe:

And I will purge thy mortall grossnesse so,

That thou shalt like an ayry spirit go.

Pease-blossome, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-feed.

Enter foure fairies.

Fai. Ready; and *I*, and *I*, and *I*. Where shall we go?

Tita. Be kinde and curteous to this gentleman,
Hop in his walkes, and gambole in his eies,
Feede him with apricocks, and dewberries,
With purple grapes, greene figs, and mulberries,
The hony bags steale from the humble bees,
And for night tapers, crop their waxen thighes,
And light them at the fiery glow-wormes eies,
To haue my loue to bed, and to arise
And plucke the wings from painted butterflies,
To fanne the moone-beams from his sleeping eyes,
Nod to him elues, and do him curtesies.

1. *Fai.* Haile mortall, haile.

2. *Fai.* Haile.

3. *Fai.* Haile.

Bot. I cry your worships mercy hartily; I beseech your worships name.

Cob. *Cobweb,*

Bot.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good master *Cobweb*: if *I* cut my finger, *I* shall make bold with you. Your name honest gentleman?

Peaf. *Pease-blossome.*

Bot. I pray you commend me to mistress *Squash*, your mother, and to master *Peascod* your father. Good master *Pease-blossome*, *I* shall desire you of more acquaintance to. Your name I beseech you sir?

Mus. *Mustard-seede.*

Bot. Good master *Mustard-seed*, I know your patience well: that same cowardly gyant-like oxe-beefe hath deuoured many a gentleman of your house. I promise you, your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire you more acquaintance, good master *Mustard-seede*.

Tita. Come waite vpon him, leade him to my bower.
The moone me-thinks, lookes with a watry eie,
And when she weepes, weepe euery little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tye vp my louers tongue, bring him silently.

Exit.

Enter King of Fairies, and Robin Good-fellow.

Ob. I wonder if *Titania* be awak't;
Then what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on, in extremity.
Here comes my messenger: how now mad spirit,
What night-rule now about this haunted groue?

Puck. My mistress with a monster is in loue,
Neere to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hower,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That worke for bread, vpon *Athenian* stalles,
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great *Theseus* nuptiall day:

The

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

The shallowest thick-skin of that barren fort,
Who *Piramus* presented, in their sport,
Forsooke his scene, and entred in a brake,
When I did him at this aduantage take,
An asses nolle I fixed on his head.
Anon his *Thisbie* must be answered,
And forth my * *minnock* comes: when they him spy,
As wilde geese, that the creeping fowler eye,
Or ruffed pated choughes, many in fort
(Rising and cawing at the guns report)
Seuer themselues, and madly sweepe the sky:
So at his sight, away his fellowes flye,
And at our stampe, here ore and ore one falles;
He murther cryes, and helpe from *Athens* cals,
Their sence thus weake, lost with their feares thus strong,
Made sencelesse things begin to do them wrong.
For briars and thornes at their apparell snatch,
Some sleeues, some hats, from yeelders all things catch,
I led them on in this distracted feare,
And left sweete *Piramus* translated there:
When in that moment (so it came to passe)
Tytania waked, and straightway lou'd an asse.

Ob. This falles out better than I could deuise:
But hast thou yet † *lacht* the *Athenians* eyes,
With the loue iuyce, as I did bid thee do?

Rob. I tooke him sleeping (that is finisht to)
And the *Athenian* woman by his side,
That when he wak't, of force she must be eyde.

Enter Demetrius and Hermia.

Ob. Stand close, this is the same *Athenian*.

Rob. This is the woman, but not this the man.

* *Minnick.*

† *Latch'd.*

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C

Dem.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Dem. O why rebuke you him that loues you so ?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

Her. Now I but chide, but I should vse thee worfe.
For thou (I feare) hast giuen me cause to curse.
If thou hast slaine *Lyfander* in his sleepe, (to,
Being ore shooes in bloud, plunge in the deepe, and kill me
The funne was not so true vnto the day,
As he to me. Would he haue stolen away,
From sleeping *Hermia* ? Ile belecue as soone
This whole earth may be bor'd, and that the moone
May through the center creepe, and so displease
Her brothers noonetide, with th' *Antipodes*.
It cannot be but thou hast murdred him,
So should a murderer looke, so dead, so grim.

Dem. So should the murdere looke, and so should I,
Pierst through the heart with your stearne cruelty :
Yet you the murdered looke as bright, as cleare,
As yonder *Venus* in her glimmering spheare.

Her. What's this to my *Lyfander* ? where is he ?
Ah good *Demetrius*, wilt thou giue him me ?

Dem. Ide rather giue his carkasse to my hounds.

Her. Out dog, out curre, thou driu'st me past the bonds
Of maidens patience. Hast thou slaine him then ?
Henceforth be neuer numbred among men.
Oh, once tell true, * *even* for my sake,
Durst thou haue lookt vpon him being awake ?
And hast thou kild him, sleeping ? O braue tutch :
Could not a worme, an adder do so much ?
An adder did it. For with doubler tongue
Then thine (thou serpent) neuer adder stung.

Dem. You spend your passion on a mispriz'd mood,
I am not guilty of *Lyfanders* bloud :
Nor is he dead, for ought that I can tell.

* *Tell true even.*

Her.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Her. I pray thee tell me then, that he is well.

Dem. And if I could, what should I get therefore ?

Her. A priuiledge, neuer to see me more,
And from thy hated prefence part I, see me no more,
Whether he be dead or no. *Exit.*

Dem. There is no following her in this fierce vaine,
Heere therefore for a while I will remaine.
So sorrowes heauinesse doth heauier grow.
For debt that bankrout slip doth sorrow owe,
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender heere I make some stay. *Lie downe.*

Ob. What hast thou done ? Thou hast mistaken quite,
And laide the loue iuyce on some true loues sight :
Of thy misprision, must perforce ensue
Some true loue turn'd, and not a false turnd true.

Rob. Then fate ore-rules, that one man holding troth,
A million faile, confounding oath on oath.

Ob. About the wood, goe swifter then the winde,
And *Helena* of *Athens* looke thou finde.
All fancy sicke she is, and pale of cheere,
With sighes of loue, that costs the fresh bloud deare.
By some illusion see thou bring her heere,
Ile charme his eies, against she do appeare.

Robin. I go, I go, looke how I goe,
Swifter than arrow from the *Tartars* bowe. *Exit.*

Ob. Flower of this purple die,
Hit with *Cupids* archery,
Sinke in apple of his eye,
When his loue he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the *Venus* of the fky.
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Enter Pucke.

Pucke. Captaine of our fairy band,
Helena is heere at hand,
And the youth, mistooke by me,
Pleading for a louers fee.

Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fooles these mortals be!

Ob. Stand aside: the noyse they make,
Will cause *Demetrius* to awake.

Puc. Then will two at once wooe one,
That must needs be sport alone:
And those things do best please me,
That befall preposterously.

Enter Lyfander and Helena.

Lyf. Why should you think that I should wooe in scorn?
Scorne and derision neuer come in teares:
Looke when I vow I weepe; and vowes so borne,
In their natiuity all truth appeares.
How can these things in me, seeme scorne to you?
Bearing the badge of faith to proue them true.

Hel. You do aduance your cunning more and more,
When truth kils truth, O diuelish holy fray!
These vowes are *Hermias*. Will you giue her ore?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh.
Your vowes to her, and me (put in two scales)
Will euen weigh, and both as light as tales.

Lyf. I had no iudgement, when to her I swore.

Hel. Nor none in my minde, now you giue her ore.

Lyf. *Demetrius* loues her, and he loues not you.

Deme. O *Helen*, goddesse, nimph, perfect, diuine,
To what, my loue, shall I compare thine eie!
Christall is muddy, O how ripe in showe,

Thy

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow !
That pure congealed white, high *Taurus* snow,
Fan'd with the easterne winde, turnes to a crow,
When thou holdst vp thy hand. O let me kisse
This princeesse of pure white, this seale of blisse.

Hell. O spite! ô hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me, for your merriment.
If you were ciuil, and knew curtesie,
You would not do me thus much iniury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must ioyn in foules to mocke me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not vse a gentle lady so;
To vow, and sweare, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are riuals, and loue *Hermia*;
And now both riuals, to mocke *Helena*.
A trim exploit, a manly enterprize,
To coniure teares vp in a poore maides eyes,
With your derision, none of noble fort,
Would so offend a virgine, and extort
A poore foules patience, all to make you sport.

Lyfan. You are vnkinde *Demetrius*; be not so.
For you loue *Hermia*; that you know I know;
And heere with all good will, with all my heart,
In *Hermias* loue I yeeld you vp my part;
And yours of *Helena*, to me bequeath,
Whom I do loue, and will do to my death.

Hel. Neuer did mockers waste more idle breath.

Deme. *Lyfander*, keepe thy *Hermia*, I will none:
If ere I lou'd her, all that loue is gone.
My heart to her, but as guest-wife soiournd,
And now to *Helen* it is home return'd,
There to remaine.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Lyf. * *It is not so.*

Dem. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Least to thy perill thou abide it deare.
Looke where thy loue comes yonder is thy deare.

Enter Hermia.

Her. Darke night, that from the eye his function takes,
The eare more quicke of apprehension makes,
Wherein it doth impaire the seeing sense,
It paies the hearing double recompence.
Thou art not by mine eie, *Lyfander* found,
Mine eare (I thanke it) brought me to thy sound.
But why vnkindly didst thou leaue me so?

Lyf. Why should he stay, whom loue doth presse to go?

Her. What loue could presse *Lyfander* from my side?

Lyf. *Lyfanders* loue (that would not let him bide)
Faire *Helena*; who more engilds the night,
Then all yon fiery oes, and cies of light.
Why seek'st thou me? Could not this make thee know,
The hate I bare thee, made me leaue thee so?

Her. You speake not as you thinke; it cannot be.

Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy,
Now I perceiue, they haue conioynd all three,
To fashion this false sport, in spight of me.
Iniurious *Hermia*, most vngratefull maide,
Haue you conspir'd, haue you with these contriu'd
To baite me, with this foule derision?
Is all the counsell that we two haue shar'd,
The sisters vowes, the houres that we haue spent,
When we haue chid the hasty footed time,
For parting vs; O, is all forgot?
All schoole-daies friendship, child-hood innocence?
We *Hermia*, like two artificiall gods,

* *Helen it is not so.*

Haue

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Haue with our needles, created both one flower,
Both on one fampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key ;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and mindes
Had bin incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an vnion in partition,
Two louely berries moulded on one stemme,
So with two seeming bodies, but one heart,
Two of the first life coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient loue afunder,
To ioyne with men in scorning your poore friend ?
It is not friendly, tis not maidenly.
Our sexe as well as I may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feele the iniury.

Her. I am amazed at your words,
I scorne you not ; it seems that you scorne me.

Hel. Haue you not set *Lyfander*, as in scorne
To follow me, and praise my eies and face ?
And made your other loue, *Demetrius*,
(Who euen but now did spurne me with his foote)
To call me goddesse, nimph, diuine, and rare,
Precious, celestially ? Wherefore speakes he this
To her he hates ? And wherefore doth *Lyfander*
Deny your loue (so rich within his soule)
And tender me (forsooth) affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent ?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung vpon with loue, so fortunate ?
(But miserable most, to loue vnlou'd)
This you should pittie, rather then despise.

Her. I vnderstand not what you meane by this.

Hel. I, do, perseuer, counterfeit sad lookes,

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Make mouthes vpon me when I turne my backe,
Winke each at other, hold the sweete ieast vp :
This sport well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you haue any pittie, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But faryewell, tis partly mine owne fault,
Which death or absence soone shall remedy.

Lyf. Stay gentle *Helena*, heare my excuse,
My loue, my life, my foule, faire *Helena*.

Hel. O excellent !

Her. Sweete, do not scorne her so.

Dem. If she cannot entreate, I can compell.

Lyf. Thou canst compell, no more then she entreate.
Thy threats haue no more strength then her weake praise.
Helen, I loue thee, by my life I doe ;
I sweare by that which I will lose for thee,
To proue him false, that saies I loue thee not.

Dem. I say, I loue thee more than he can do.

Lyf. If thou say so, with-draw and proue it to.

Dem. Quick, come.

Her. *Lyfander*, whereto tends all this ?

Lyf. Away, you *Ethiope*.

Dem. No, no, hee'l seeme to breake loose ;
Take on as you would follow,
But yet come not : you are a tame man, go.

Lyf. Hang off thou cat, thou bur ; vile thing let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent.

Her. Why are you growne so rude ?
What change is this, sweete loue ?

Lyf. Thy loue ? out tawny *Tartar*, out ;
Out loathed medicine ; ô hated * *poison* hence.

Her. Do you not ieast ?

Hel. Yes sooth, and so do you.

* *Potion*.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Lyf. Demetrius, I will keepe my word with thee.

Dem. I would I had your bond : for I perceiue,
A weake bond holds you ; Ile not trust your word.

Lyf. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead ?
Although I hate her, Ile not harme her so.

Her. What ? can you do me greater harme then hate ?
Hate me, wherefore ? O me, what newes my loue ?
Am not I *Hermia* ? Are not you *Lyfander* ?
I am as faire now, as I was ere while.
Since night you lou'd me ; yet since night you left me.
Why then you left me (ô the gods forbid)
In earnest, shall I say ?

Lyf. I, by my life ;
And neuer did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt ;
Be certaine ; nothing truer ; tis no ieast,
That I do hate thee, and loue *Helena*.

Her. O me, you iuggler, you canker blossome,
You theefe of loue ; what, haue you come by night,
And stolne my loues heart from him ?

Hel. Fine ifaith.
Haue you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulnesse ? What, will you teare
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue ?
Fie, fie, you counterfet, you puppet, you.

Her. Puppet ? why so ? I, that way goes the game.
Now I perceiue that she hath made compare
Betweene our statures, she hath vrg'd her height,
And with her personage, her tall parsonage,
Her height (forsooth) she hath preuaild with him.
And are you growne so high in his esteeme,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low ?
How low am I, thou painted may-pole ? Speake,

How

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

How low am I ? I am not yet so low,
But that my nailes can reach vnto thine eyes.

Hel. I pray you though you mocke me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me ; I was neuer curst :
I haue no gift at all in shrewishnesse :
I am a right maid for my cowardize ;
Let her not strike me : you perhaps may thinke,
Because she is something lower than myselfe,
That I can match her.

Her. Lower ? harke againe.

Hel. Good *Hermia*, do not be so bitter with me,
I euermore did loue you *Hermia*,
Did euer keepe your counsels, neuer wronged you,
Saue that in loue vnto *Demetrius*,
I told him of your stealth vnto this wood.
He followed you, for loue I followed him,
But he hath chid me hence, and threatned me
To strike me, spurne me, nay to kill me to ;
And now, so you will let me quiet goe,
To *Athens* will I beare my folly backe,
And follow you no further. Let me go.
You see how simple, and how fond I am.

Her. Why get you gone : who ist that hinders you ?

Hel. A foolish heart, that I leaue heere behinde.

Her. What, with *Lyfander* ?

Hel. With *Demetrius*.

Lyf. Be not afraid, she shall not harme thee *Helena*.

Deme. No sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

Hel. O when shee's angry, she is keene and shrewd,
She was a vixen when she went to schoole,
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

Her. Little againe ? Nothing but low and little ?
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus ?
Let me come to her.

Lyf.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Lyf. Get you gone you dwarfe,
You minimus, of hindring knot grasse made,
You bead, you acorne.

Dem. You are too officious,
In her behalfe that scornes your seruices.
Let her alone, speake not of *Helena*,
Take not her part. For if thou dost intend
Neuer so little shew of loue to her,
Thou shalt abie it.

Lyf. Now she holds me not,
Now follow if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in *Helena*.

Exit.

Dem. Follow? Nay, Ile go with thee cheeke by iowle.

Her. You mistresse, all this coyle is long of you.
Nay, goe not backe.

Her. I will not trust you I,
Not longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine, are quicker for a fray,
My legs are longer though to runne away.

Her. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say. *Excunt.*

Ob. This is thy negligence, still thou mistak'st,
Or else commit'st thy knaueries wilfully.

Puck. Beleeue me, king of shaddowes, I mistooke.
Did not you tell me, I should know the man,
By the *Athenian* garments he hath on?
And so farre blamelesse proues my enterprize,
That I haue nointed an *Athenians* eyes,
And so farre am I glad, it so did fort,
As this their iangling I esteeme a sport.

Ob. Thou see'st these louers seeke a place to fight,
Hie therefore *Robin*, ouercast the night,
The starry welkin couer thou anon,
With drooping fogge as blacke as *Acheron*,

And

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

And leade these testy riuals so astray,
As one come not within anothers way.
Like to *Lyfander*, sometime frame thy tongue,
Then stirre *Demetrius* vp with bitter wrong ;
And sometime raile thou like *Demetrius* ;
And from each other looke thou leade them thus,
Till ore their browes, death-counterfeiting, sleepe
With leaden ledgs, and batty wings doth creepe ;
Then crush this hearbe into *Lyfanders* eie,
Whose liquor hath this vertuous property,
To take from thence all error, with his might,
And make his eie-bals rolle with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seeme a dreame, and fruitlesse vision,
And backe to *Athens* shall the louers wend
With league, whose date till death shall neuer end.
Whiles I in this affaire do thee apply,
Ile to my queen, and beg her *Indian* boy ;
And then I will her charmed eie release
From monsters view, and all things shall be peace.

Puck. My fairie lord, this must be done with haste,
For night swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines *Auroras* harbinger ;
At whose approach, ghosts wandring heere and there,
Troope home to church-yards ; damned spirits all,
That in crosse waies and flouds haue buriall,
Already to their wormy beds are gone ;
For feare least day should looke their shames vpon,
They wilfully themselues exile from light,
And must for aie consort with blacke browd night.

Ob. But we are spirits of another fort :
I, with the mornings loue haue oft made sport,
And like a forrester, the groues may tread,
Euen till the Easterne gate all fiery red,

Opening

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Opening on *Neptune*, with faire blessed beames,
Turnes into yellow gold, his salt greene streames.
But notwithstanding haste, make no delay,
We may effect this businesse, yet ere day.

Puck. Vp and downe, vp and downe, I will leade them vp
and downe : I am feard in field and towne. *Goblin*, lead
them vp and downe : here comes one.

Enter Lyfander.

Lyf. Where art thou, proud *Demetrius* ? Speak thou now.

Rob. Here villaine, drawne and ready. Where art thou ?

Lyf. I will be with thee straight.

Rob. Follow me then to plainer ground.

Enter Demetrius.

Dem. *Lyfander*, speake againe ;

Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled ?

Speake in some bush. Where dost thou hide thy head ?

Rob. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for warres,
And wilt not come ? Come recreant, come thou childe,
Ile whip thee with a rod. He is defil'd
That drawes a sword on thee.

Deme. Yea, art thou there ?

Rob. Follow my voice, wee'l try no manhood here. *Exeunt*.

Lyf. He goes before me, and still dares me on,
When I come where he calles, then hee's gone.
The villaine is much lighter heel'd then I ;
I followed fast, but faster he did flie ;
That fallen am I in darke vneuen way,
And here will rest me. Come thou gentle day :
For if but once thou shew me thy gray light,
Ile finde *Demetrius*, and reuenge this spight.

Robin

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Robin and Demetrius.

Rob. Ho, ho, ho; coward, why com'st thou not?

Dem. Abide me, if thou dar'st. For well I wot,
Thou runst before me, shifting euery place,
And dar'st not stand, nor looke me in the face.
Where art thou?

Rob. Come hither, I am here.

De. Nay then thou mockst me; thou shalt buy this deare,
If euer I thy face by day-light see.
Now goe thy way: faintnesse constraineth me,
To measure out my length on this cold bed,
By daies approach looke to be visited.

Enter Helena.

Hel. O weary night, ô long and tedious night,
Abate thy houres, shine comforts from the East,
That I may backe to *Athens* by day-light,
From these that my poore company detest;
And sleepe that sometimes shuts vp sorrowes eie,
Steale me a while from mine owne company.

Sleepe.

Rob. Yet but three? Come one more,
Two of both kindes makes vp foure.
Here she comes, curst and sad,
Cupid is a knauish lad,

Enter Hermia.

Thus to make poore females mad.

Her. Neuer so weary, neuer so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew, and torne with briars,
I can no further crawle, no further goe;
My legs can keepe no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the breake of day,
Heauens shield *Lysander*, if they meane a fray.

Rob. On the ground sleepe sound,
Ile apply your eye gentle loue, remedy.

When

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

When thou wak'st, thou tak'st
True delight in the sight of thy former ladies eie,
And the country prouerbe knowne,
That euery man should take his owne,
In your waking shall be showne.
Iacke shall haue *Ill*, nought shall go ill,
The man shall haue his mare againe, and all shall be well.

*Enter Queene of Fairies, and Clowne, and Fairies, and the King
behinde them.*

Tita. Come sit thee downe vpon this flowry bed,
While I thy amiable cheekes do coy,
And sticke muske roses in thy sleeke smoothe head,
And kisse thy faire large ears, my gentle ioy.

Clowne. Where's *Pease-blossome*?

Peaf. Ready.

Clowne. Scratch my head, *Pease-blossome*. Wher's moun-
sieur *Cobweb*?

Cob. Ready.

Clo. Mounsieur *Cobweb*, good mounsieur get your weapons in
your hand, and kill me a red hipt humble-bee, on the top of
a thistle; and good mounsieur bring me the hony bag. Doe
not fret your selfe too much in the action, mounsieur; and
good mounsieur haue a care the hony bag breake not, I would
be loth to haue you ouerflowne with a hony-bag signiour.
Where's mounsieur *Mustardseed*?

Muf. Ready.

Clo. Giue me your neafe, mounsieur *Mustardseed*.

Pray you leaue your courtesie, good monsieur.

Must. What's your wil?

Clou. Nothing good mounsieur, but to helpe caualery *Cobweb*
to scratch. I must to the barbers mounsieur, for me-thinkes I
am maruailous hairy about the face. And I am such a ten-
der asse, if my haire do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Tita. What, wilt thou heare some musick, my sweet loue?

Clowne. I haue a reasonable good eare in musicke. Let vs haue the tongs and the bones.

Tita. Or say sweete loue, what thou desirest to eate.

Clow. Truly a pecke of prouender; I could mounch your good dry oates. Me-thinkes I haue a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweete hay hath no fellow.

Tita. I haue a venturous fairy,
That shall seeke the squirrels hoard,
And fetch thee new nuts.

Clou. I had rather haue a handfull or two of dried pease.
But I pray you let none of your people stir me, I haue an exposition of sleepe come vpon me.

Tyta. Sleepe thou, and I will winde thee in my armes,
Fairies be gone, and be alwaies away.
So doth the woodbine, the sweet honisuckle,
Gently entwist; the female iuy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elme.
O how I loue thee! how I dote on thee!

Enter Robin Goodfellow.

Ob. Welcome good *Robin*: feest thou this sweet fight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pittie.
For meeting her of late behinde the wood,
Seeking sweete fauors for this hatefull foole,
I did vpbraid her, and fall out with her.
For she his hairy temples then had rounded.
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers.
And that same dew which sometime on the buds,
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearles;
Stood now within the pretty flouriets eies,
Like teares that did their owne disgrace bewaile.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild tearmes begd my patience,

I then

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

I then did aske of her, her changeling childe,
Which straight she gaue me, and her fairy sent
To beare him to my bower in Fairy land.
And now I haue the boy, I will vndoe.
This hatefull imperfection of her eies.
And gentle *Pucke*, take this transformed scalpe,
From off the head of this *Athenian* swaine;
That he awaking when the other do,
May all to *Athens* backe againe repaire,
And thinke no more of this nights accidents,
But as the fierce vexation of a dreame.
But first I will release the fairy queene.

*Be as thou wast wont to be ;
See as thou wast wont to see.
Dians bud, or Cupids flower ;
Hath such force and blessed power.*

Now my *Titania* wake you, my sweete queene.

Tita. My *Oberon*, what visions haue I seene !
Me-thought I was enamored of an asse.

Ob. There lies your loue.

Tita. How came these things to passe ?
Oh, how mine eies doth loathe * *this* visage now !

Ob. Silence a while. *Robin* take of this head ;
Titania, musicke call, and strike more dead
Then common sleepe ; of all these, fine the sense.

Tita. Musicke, ho musicke, such as charmeth sleepe.

Rob. When thou wak'st, with thine owne fooles eies peep.

Ob. Sound musick ; come my queen, take hands with me
And rocke the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to morrow midnight, solemnly
Dance in duke *Theseus* house triumphantly.

* *His.*

VOL. I.

D

And

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

And blesse it to all faire posterity.

There shall the paires of faithfull louers be
Wedded, with *Theseus*, all in iollity.

Rob. Fairy king, attend and marke,
I do heare the morning larke.

Ob. Then my queene in silence sad,
Trip we after the nights shade;
We the globe can compasse soone,
Swifter then the wandring moone.

Tita. Come my lord, and in our flight.
Tell me how it came this night,
That I sleeping heere was found,
With these mortals on the ground.

Exeunt.

Enter Theseus and all his traine.

Winde hornes.

Thef. Goe one of you, finde out the forrester,
For now our obseruation is perform'd;
And since we haue the vaward of the day,
My loue shall heare the musicke of my hounds.
Vncouple in the westerne valley, let them go;
Dispatch I say, and finde the forrester.
We will faire queene; vp to the mountaines top,
And marke the muscall confusion
Of hounds and eccho in coniunction.

Hip. I was with *Hercules* and *Cadmus* once,
When in a wood of *Creete* they bayed the beare
With hounds of *Sparta*; neuer did I heare
Such gallant chiding. For besides the groues,
The skies, the fountaines, euery region neere,
Seeme all one mutuall cry. I neuer heard
So muscally a discord, such sweete thunder.

Thef. My hounds are bred out of the *Spartan* kinde,
So flew'd, so fanded, and their heads are hung
With eares that sweepe away the morning dew,

Crooke

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Crooke kneed, and dew-lapt, like *Theſſalian* buls,
Slow in purſuite, but matcht in mouth like bels,
Each vnder each. A cry more tuneable
Was neuer hollow'd to, nor cheer'd with horne,
In *Creete*, in *Sparta*, nor in *Theſſaly*;
Iudge when you heare. But ſoft, what nimphs are theſe?

Egeus. My lord, this is my daughter heere aſleepe,
And this *Lyſander*, this *Demetrius* is,
This *Helena*, olde *Nedars Helena*,
I wonder of * *this* being heere together.

The. No doubt they roſe vp early, to obſerue
The right of May; and hearing our intent,
Came heere in grace of our ſolemnity.
But ſpeake *Egeus*, is not this the day
That *Hermia* ſhould giue anſwer of her choyſe?

Egeus. It is, my lord.

Th. Go bid the huntſmen wake them with their hornes.

Shout within, they all ſtart vp. Winde hornes.

Theſ. Good morrow friends: Saint *Valentine* is paſt,
Begin theſe wood birds but to couple now?

Lyf. Pardon, my lord.

Theſ. I pray you all ſtand vp.

I know you two are riuall enemies.
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is ſo farre from iealouſie,
To ſleepe by hate, and feare no enmity.

Lyf. My lord, I ſhall reply amazedly,
Halfe ſleepe, halfe waking. But as yet, I ſweare,
I cannot truely ſay how I came here.
But as I thinke (for truely would I ſpeake)
And now I do bethinke me, ſo it is;
I came with *Hermia* hither. Our intent

* *Their*

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Was to be gone from *Athens*, where we might be
Without the perill of the *Athenian* law.

Ege. Enough, enough my lord : you haue enough ;
I beg the law, the law, vpon his head :
They would haue stolne away, they would, *Demetrius*,
Thereby to haue defeated you and me :
You of your wife, and me of my consent ;
Of my consent, that she should be your wife.

Dem. My lord, faire *Helen* told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither, to this wood,
And I in fury hither followed them ;
Faire *Helena*, in fancy * followed me.
But my good lord, I wot not by what power
(But by some power it is) my loue
To *Hermia* (melted as the snow)
Seemes to me now as the remembrance of an idle gaude,
Which in my childehood I did dote vpon :
And all the faith, the vertue of my heart,
The obiect and the pleasure of mine eie,
Is onely *Helena*. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd, ere I see *Hermia*,
But like a sicknesse, did I loathe this food,
But as in health, come to my naturall taste,
Now do I wish it, loue it, long for it,
And will for euermore be true to it.

Thes. Faire louers, you are fortunately met ;
Of this discourse, we will heare more anon.

Egeus, I will ouerbeare your will ;

For in the temple, by and by with vs,

These couples shall eternally be knit.

And for the morning now is something worne,
Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.

Away, with vs to *Athens* ; three and three,

* Following.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Wee'l hold a feast in great solemnity.

Come *Hippolita*.

Exit.

Deme. These things seeme small and vndistinguishable,
Like farre off mountaines turned into clouds.

Her. Me-thinks I see these things with parted eie,
When euery thing seemes double.

Hel. So me-thinkes :
And I haue found *Demetrius*, like a iewell,
Mine owne, and not mine owne.

Dem. Are you sure
That we are awake ? It seemes to me,
That yet we sleepe, we dreame. Do not you thinke,
The duke was heere, and bid vs follow him ?

Her. Yea, and my father.

Hel. And *Hippolita*.

Lyf. And he bid vs follow to the temple.

Dem. Why then we are awake ; let's follow him, and by
the way let vs recount our dreames. *Exit.*

Clo. When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer. My
next is, most faire *Piramus*. Hey ho. *Peter Quince* ? *Flute*
the bellowes-mender ? *Snout* the tinker ? *Starueling* ? Gods
my life ! Stolne hence, and left me asleepe : I haue had a most
rare vision. I haue had a dreame, past the wit of man, to
say, what dreame it was. Man is but an asse, if he go about
to expound this dreame. Me-thought I was, there is no man
can tell what. Me-thought I was, and me-thought I had.
But man is but patcht a foole, if he will offer to say, what
me-thought I had. The eie of man hath not heard, the eare
of man hath not seene, mans hand is not able to taste, his
tongue to conceiue, nor his heart to report, what my dream
was. I will get *Peter Quince* to write a ballet of this dream,
it shall be call'd *Bottomes Dreame*, because it hath no bot-
tome ; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before
the duke. Peraduenture, to make it the more gracious, I
shall sing it at her death.

Exit.

Enter

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Enter Quince, Flute, Thisbie, and the rabble.

Quin. Haue you sent to *Bottomes* house ? Is he come home yet ?

Flute. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

Thisf. If he come not, then the play is mard. It goes not forward, doth it ?

Quin. It is not possible : you haue not a man in all *Athens*, able to discharge *Piramus* but he.

Thisf. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handy-craft man in *Athens*.

Quin. Yea, and the best person too, and he is a very paramour, for a sweete voyce.

Thisf. You must say, paragon. A paramour is (God blesse vs) a thing of nought.

Enter Snug the Ioyner.

Snug. Masters, the duke is comming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married. If our sport had gone forward, we had all beene made men.

Thisf. O sweete bully *Bottom* : thus hath he lost sixpence a day, during his life ; he could not haue scaped sixpence a day. And the duke had not giuen him sixpence a day for playing *Piramus*, Ile be hang'd. He would haue deserued it. Sixpence a day in *Piramus*, or nothing.

Enter Bottom.

Bot. Where are there lads ? Where are these hearts ?

Quin. *Bottom*, 'ô most couragious day ! O most happy houre !

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders ; but aske mee not what. For if I tell you, I not true *Athenian*. I will tel you euery thing right as it fell out.

Quin.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Quin. Let vs heare, sweete *Bottom*.

Bot. Not a word of me : all that I will tell you, is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparell together, good strings to your beards, new ribbands to your pumps, meete presently at the palace, euerie man looke ore his part : for the short and the long is, our play is preferd. In any case let *Thisy* haue cleane linnen : and let not him that plaies the lion, paire his nailes, for they shall hang out for the lions clawes. And most deare actors, eate no onions, nor garlicke ; for we are to vtter sweete breath, and I do not doubt but to heare them say, it is a sweete comedy. No more words : away, go away.

Enter Theseus, Hippolita, and Philostrate.

Hip. Tis strange my *Theseus*, that these louers speake of.

The. More strange than true. I neuer may beleue
These anticke fables, nor these fairy toies,
Louers and mad men haue such seething braines,
Such shaping phantasies, that apprehend more
Than coole reason euer comprehends.
The lunaticke, the louer, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact.
One sees more diuels than vaste hell can hold ;
That is the mad man. The louer, all as franticke,
Sees *Helens* beauty in a brow of *Egipt*.
The poets eie in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance
From heauen to earth, from earth to heauen.
And as imagination bodies forth the formes of things
Vnknowne ; the poets pen turnes them to shapes,
And giues to airy nothing, a locall habitation,
And a name. Such trickes hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some ioy,
It comprehends some bringer of that ioy.
Or in the night, imagining some feare,
How easie is a bush suppos'd a beare ?

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Hip. But all the story of the night told ouer,
And all their mindes transfigur'd so together,
More witnesseth than fancies images,
And growes to something of great constancy;
But howsoeuer, strange and admirable.

Enter louers : Lyfander, Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena,

Thef. Here come the louers, full of ioy and mirth:
Ioy, gentle friends, ioy and fresh daies
Of loue accompany your hearts.

Lyf. More than to vs, waite in your roiall walkes, your
boord, your bed.

Thef. Come now, what maskes, what dances shall wee haue,
To weare away this long age of three houres,
Betweene or after supper, and bed-time?
Where is our vsuall manager of mirth?
What reuels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing houre?
Call *Philostrate*.

Philo. Heere mighty *Theseus*.

Thef. Say, what abridgment haue you for this euening?
What maske, what musicke? how shall we beguile
The lazie time, if not with some delight?

Phil. There is a briefe, how many sports are rife.
Make choise of which your highnesse will see first.

Thef. The battell with the centaurs to be sung
By an *Athenian* eunuch, to the harpe.
Wee'l none of that. That haue I tolde my loue,
In glory of my kinsman *Hercules*.

The riot of the tipsie *Bachanals*
Tearing the *Thracian* finger, in their rage?
That is an olde deuice; and it was plaid,
When I from *Thebes* came last a conqueror.
The thrice three Muses, mourning for the death

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Of learning, late deceast in beggery.
That is some satire keene and criticall,
Not sorting with a nuptiall ceremony.
A tedious briefe scene of young *Piramus*,
And his loue *Thisby*; very tragicall mirth?
Merry and tragicall? Tedious and briefe? That is hot ice,
And wondrous strange snow. How shall we find the concord
of this discord?

Philo. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as briefe, as I haue knowne a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long;
Which makes it tedious. For in all the play,
There is not one worde apt, one plaier fitted.
And tragicall, my noble lord, it is: for *Piramus*
Therein doth kill himselfe. Which when I saw
Rehearst, I must confesse, made mine eyes water;
But more merry teares the passion of loud laughter
Neuer shed.

Thes. What are they that do play it?

Philo. Hard handed men, that worke in *Athens* here,
Which neuer labour'd in their mindes till now;
And now haue toyed their vnbreathed memories,
With this same play, against your nuptiall.

Thes. And we will heare it.

Phi. No, my noble lord, it is not for you. I haue heard
It ouer, and it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Vnlesse you can finde sport in their intents,
Extremely stretcht, and cond with cruell paine,
To do you seruice.

Thes. I will heare that play. For neuer any thing
Can be amisse, when simplenesse and duty tender it.
Goe bring them in, and take your places, ladies.

Hip. I loue not to see wretchednesse orecharged;
And duety in his seruice perishing.

Thes.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Thef. Why gentle sweete, you shall see no such thing.

Hip. He saies, they can do nothing in this kinde.

The. The kinder we, to giue them thanks for nothing.

Our sport shall be, to take what they mistake :
And what poore duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.

Where I haue come, great clearkes haue purposed
To grette me with premeditated welcomes ;
Where I haue seene them shiuer and looke pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practiz'd accent in their feares,
And in conclusion, dumbly haue broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me sweete,
Out of this silence yet, I pickt a welcome :
And in the modesty of fearefull duty,
I read as much, as from the ratling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Loue therefore, and tongue-tide simplicity,
In least, speake most, to my capacity.

Philo. So please your grace, the prologue is addrest.

Duke. Let him approach.

Enter the Prologue.

Pro. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should thinke, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To shew our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then, we come but in despight.
We do not come, as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not heere. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand ; and by their show,
You shall know all, that you are like to know.

Thef.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Thes. This fellow doth not stand vpon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue, like a rough colt: hee knowes not the stop. A good morall my lord. It is not enough to speake, but to speake true.

Hip. Indeed he hath plaid on this prologue, like a childe on a recorder, a found, but not in gouernment.

Thes. His speech was like a tangled chaine; nothing impaired, but all difordered. Who is next?

Enter Pyramus and Thisby, Wall, Moon-shine, and Lyon.

Prologue. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this shew,
But wonder on, till truth make all things plaine.

This man is *Piramus*, if you would know;

This beaution lady, *Thisby* is certaine,

This man with lyme and roughcast, doth present

Wall, that vile wall, which did these louers funder:

And through wals chinke (poore foules) they are content

To whisper. At the which, let no man wonder.

This man with lanthorne, dog, and bush of thorne,

Presenteth moon-shine. For if you will know,

By moon-shine did these lovers thinke no scorne

To meet at *Ninus* toombe, there, there to wooe:

This grizly beast (which Lyon hight by name)

The trusty *Thisby*, comming first by night,

Did scarre away, or rather did affright:

And as she fled, her mantle she did fall;

Which lion vile with bloody mounth did staine.

Anon comes *Piramus*, sweete youth and tall,

And findes his trusty *Thisbies* mantle staine;

Whereat, with blade, with bloody blamefull blade,

He brauely broacht his boiling bloody breast,

And *Thisby*, tarrying in mulberry shade,

His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,

Let

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Let *Lyon*, *Moone-shine*, *Wall*, and lovers twaine,
At large discourse, while here they do remaine.

Thes. I wonder if the *Lyon* be to speake.

Deme. No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many
asses do.

Exit Lyon, Thisby, and Moone-shine.

Wall. In this same interlude it doth befall,
That I, one *Flute* (by name) present a wall:
And such a wall, as I would haue you thinke,
That had in it a crannied hole or chinke:
Through which the louers, *Piramus* and *Thisby*,
Did whisper often, very secretly,
This lome, this-roughcast, and this stone doth show,
That I am that same wall; the truth is so.
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearefull louers are to whisper.

Thes. Would you desire lime and haire to speak better?

Deme. It is the wittiest partition, that euer I heard dis-
course, my lord.

Thes. *Piramus* draws neere the wall, silence.

Pir. O grim lookt night, ô night with hue so blacke,
O night, which euer art, when day is not:
O night, ô night, alacke, alacke, alacke,
I feare my *Thisbies* promise is forgot.
And thou ô wall, ô sweet, ô louely wall,
That stands betweene her fathers ground and mine,
Thou wall, ô wall, ô sweete and louely wall,
Shew me thy chinke, to blink through with mine eie.
Thanks courteous wall. *Love* shield thee well for this.
But what see I? No *Thisby* do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no blisse,
Curst be thy stones, for thus deceiuing me.

Thes. The wall me-thinks being sensible, should curse
again.

Pir.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Pir. No in truth fir, he should not. Deceiuing me,
Is *Thisbies* cue; she is to enter now, and I am to spy
Her through the wall. You shall see it will fall
Pat as I told you; yonder she comes.

Enter Thisbie.

This. O wall, full often hast thou heard my mones,
For parting mp faire *Piramus*, and me.

My cherry lips have often kist thy stones;

Thy stones with lime and haire knit now againe,

Pyra. I see a voice; now will I to the chinke,
To spy and I can heare my *Thisbies* face. *Thisby*?

This My loue thou art, my loue I thinke.

Pir. Thinke what thou wilt, I am thy louers grace,
And like *Limander*, am I trusty still.

This. And I like *Helen* till the fates me kill.

Pir. Not *Shafalus* to *Procrus*, was so true.

This. As *Shafalus* to *Procrus*, I to you.

Pir. O kisse me through the hole of this vile wall.

This. I kisse the wals hole, not your lips at all.

Pir. Wilt thou at *Ninnes* toomb meete me straightway?

This. Tide life, tide death, I come without delay.

Wall. Thus haue I *Wall*, my part discharged so;
And being done, thus *Wall* away doth goe.

Du. Now is the Moon vsed betweene the two neighbors.

Deme. No remedy, my lord, when wals are so swilfull, to
heare without warning.

Dutch. This is the silliest stufte that ere I heard.

Duke. The best in this kinde are but shadowes, and the
worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Dutch. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

Duke. If wee imagine no worfe of them then they of them-
selues,

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

felues, they may passe for excellent men. Heere come two noble beasts, in a man and a lyon.

Enter Lyon and Moone-shine.

Lyon. You ladies, you (whose gentle hearts do feare
The smallest monstrous mouse that creepes on floore)
May now perchance, both quake and tremble heere,
When lyon rough, in wildest rage doth roare.
Then know that I, as *Snug* the ioyner am
A lyon fell, nor else no lyons damme,
For if I should, as lyon come in strife,
Into this place, t'were pittie on my life.

Duke. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

Deme. The very best at a beast, my lord, that ere I saw.

Lys. This lyon is a very fox for his valour.

Duke. True, and a goose for his discretion.

De. Not so my lord. For his valour cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

Duke. His discretion I am sure cannot carry his valour. For the goose carries not the fox. It is well; leaue it to his discretion, and let vs § *hearken* to the Moone.

Moon. This lanthorne doth the horned moone present.

Deme. He should haue worne the hornes on his head.

Duk. He is no crescent, and his hornes are inuisible, within the circumference.

Moone. This lanthorne doth the horned moone present, my selfe, the man ith' moone do seeme to be.

Duke. This is the greatest error of all the rest; the man should be put into the lanthorne. How is it else the man i'th moone.

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle.
For you see it is already in snuffe.

Dutch. I am weary of this moone; would he would change.

§ *Listen.*

Duke.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Duke. It appears by his small light of discretion, that hee is in the wane: but yet in courtesie, in all reason, we must stay the time.

Lyfand. Proceed *Moone*.

Moone. All that I have to say, is to tell you, that the lanthorne is the moone; I, the man in the moone; this thorne bush, my thorne bush, and this dog, my dog.

Deme. Why all these should bee in the lanthorne: for they are in the moone. But silence, heere comes *Thisby*.

Enter Thisby.

Th. This old *Ninies* toomb: wher's my loue?

Lyon. Oh.

Dem. Well roard *Lyon*.

Duke. Well runne *Thisbie*.

Dutch. Well shone *Moone*. Truly the *Moone* shines with a good grace.

Duke. Well mouz'd *Lyon*.

Dem. And then came *Piramus*.

Lys. And so the *Lyon* vanish.

Enter Piramus.

Pyr. Sweet *Moone*, I thank thee for thy funny beames,
I thank thee *Moone*, for shining now so bright.

For by thy gracious, golden, glittering beames,
I trust to take of truest *Thisbie* fight.

But stay: ô spight! but marke, poore knight,
What dreadful dole is here?

Eyes do you see! how can it be!

O dainty ducke, ô deare!

Thy mantle good, what staind with blood?

Approach ye furies fell,

O fates come, come, cut thred and thrum,

Quaile, crush, conclude, and quell.

Duke.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Duke. This passion, and the death of a deare friend would
goe neere to make a man looke sad.

Dutch. Beshrew my heart, but I pittie the man.

Pir. O wherefore nature, didst thou lyons frame?
Since lyon vilde hath heere deflour'd my deare;
Which is, no, no, which was the fairest dame
That liu'd, that lou'd, that lik't, that look't with cheere.
Come teares confound, out sword and wound
The pap of *Piramus* :

I, that left pap, where heart doth hop;
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead, now am I fled, my soule, is in the sky,
Tongue lose thy light, moone take thy flight,
Now dye, dye, dye, dye, dye.

Dem. No die, but an ace for him; for he is but one.

Lys. Lesse then an ace man. For he is dead, he is no-
thing.

Duke. With the helpe of a surgeon, he might yet recouer
and proue an asse.

Dutch. How chance *Moone-sbine* is gone before?
Thisby comes backe, and findes her louer.

Duke. She will finde him by star-light. Here she comes,
and her passion ends the play.

Dut. Me-thinks she should not vse a long one for such a
Piramus : I hope she will be briefer.

Dem. A moth will turne the ballance, which *Piramus*,
which *Thisbie* is the better : hee for a man, God warnd vs;
she for a woman, God bleffe vs.

Lys. She hath spied him already, with those sweete eies.

Dem. And thus she meanes, *videlicet*.

This. Asleepe my loue? What, dead my doue?
O *Piramus* arise,
Speake, speake. Quite dumbe! Dead, dead? A toombe
Must cover thy sweet eies.

These

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

These lilly lips, this cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheekes
Are gone, are gone ; louers make mone :
His eyes were greene as leekes.
O sisters three, come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milke,
Lay them in gore, since you haue shone
With sheeres, his thred of silke.
Tongue not a word, come trusty sword,
Come blade, my breast imbrew :
And farwell friends, thus *Thysbie* ends ;
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

Duke. *Moon-sbine* and *Lyon* are left to bury the dead.

Deme. I and *Wall* too.

Lyon. No, I assure you the wall is downe, that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the Epilogue, or to heare a Bergomask dance, betweene two of our company ?

Duke. No Epilogue, I pray you ; for your play needs no excuse. Neuer excuse ; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it, had plaid *Piramus*, and hang'd himselfe in *Thysbies* garter, it would haue beene a fine tragedy : and so it is truely, and very notably discharg'd. But come, your Burgomaske ; let your Epilogue alone.

The iron tongue of midnight hath tolde twelue.

Louers to bed, tis almost fairy time.

I feare we shall out-sleepe the comming morne,

As much as we this night haue ouer-watcht.

This palpable grosse play hath well beguil'd

The heauy gate of night. Sweet friends to bed.

A fortnight hold we this solemnity,

In nightly reuels, and new iollity.

Exeunt.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Enter Pucke.

Puck. Now the hungry Lyons rores,
And the Wolfe beholds the moone ;
Whilst the heauy ploughman snores,
All with weary taske fore-done.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the scritch-owle, scritch'ing loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe,
In remembrance of a shrowd.
Now it is the time of night,
That the graues, all gaping wide,
Euery one lets forth his spright,
In the church way paths to glide.
And we fairies, that do runne,
By the triple *Hecates* teame,
From the presence of the sunne,
Following darknesse like a dreame,
Now are frolicke ; not a mouse
Shall disturbe this hallowed house.
I am sent with broome before,
To sweepe the dust behinde the doore.

Enter King and Queen of Fairies, with their traine.

Ob. Through the house giue glimmering light,
By the dead and drowfie fier,
Euery elfe and fairy spright,
Hop as light as bird from brier,
And this ditty after me, sing and dance it trippingly.

Tita. First rehearse this song by roate,
To each word a warbling note.
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing and blesse this place.

Ob.

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Ob. Now vntill the breake of day,
Through this house, each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by vs shall blessed be :
And the issue there create,
Euer shall be fortunate :
So shall all the couples three,
Euer true in louing be :
And the blots of natures hand,
Shall not in their issue stand.
Neuer mole, hare-lip, nor scarre,
Nor marke prodigious, such as are
Despised in natiuity,
Shall vpon their children be.
With this field dew consecrate,
Euery fairy take his gate,
And each feuerall chamber blesse,
Through this palace, with sweete peace,
Euer shall in safety rest,
And the owner of it blest.
Trip away, make no stay ;
Meete me all, by breake of day.

Exeunt.

Robin. If we shadowes haue offended,
Thinke but this (and all is mended)
That you haue but slumbred heere,
While * *this* visions did appeare.
And this weake and idle theame,
No more yeelding but a dreame,
Gentles, do not reprehend.
If you pardon, we will mend.
And as I am an honest *Pucke*,
If we haue vnearned lucke,

* *These.*

E 2

Now

A MIDSOMMER NIGHTS DREAME.

Now to scape the serpents tongue,
We will make amends ere long :
Else the *Pucke* a lyar call.
So good night vnto you all.
Giue me your hands, if we be friends,
And *Robin* shall restore amends.

F I N I S.

A MOST
Pleasant and Excellent Conceited
C O M E D Y,
O F
Sir IOHN FALSTAFFE,
AND THE
Merry Wiues of Windsor.
WITH THE
Swaggering Vaine of Ancient PISTOLL,
and Corporall Nym.
WRITTEN BY
W. SHAKESPEARE.



Printed for ARTHUR JOHNSON, 1619.

☞ This Play was written in the Author's best and ripeſt Years after Henry the Fourth, by the Command of Queen Elizabeth. There is a Tradition, that it was compoſed at a Fortnight's Warning : but that muſt be meant only of the firſt imperfect Sketch of this Comedy, which is yet extant in an old Quarto Edition, printed in 1619. The other, which follows it, was altered and improved by the Author in almoſt every Speech.

Mr. POPE.

A
Pleasant Conceited Comedie
O F
Sir IOHN FALSTAFFE,
A N D
The Merry Wiues of Windsor.

Enter Iustice Shallow, Sir Hugh, Master Page, and Slender.

Shallow.

NERE talke to me, Ile make a star-chamber matter of it.

The councell shall know it.

Page. Nay good M. *Shallow* be perswaded by me.

Slen. Nay surely my vnckle shall not put it vp so.

Sir Hugh. Will you not heare reasons M. *Slender* ?
You should heare reasons.

Shal. Though he be a knight, he shall not thinke to carry it so away.

Master Page I will not be wronged. For you
Sir, I loue you, and for my cousin,
He comes to looke vpon your daughter.

Page. And heeres my hand, and if my daughter
Like him so well as I, wee'l quickly haue't a match:
In the meane time let me entreate you to sojourne

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Heere a while : and on my life
Ile vndertake to make you friends.

Sir Hugh. I pray you M. *Shallow* let it be so.
The matter is put to arbitarments.
The first man is master *Page*, videlicet master *Page*.
The second is my selfe, videlicet my selfe.
The third and last man, is mine Host of the Garter.

Enter Sir Iohn Falstaffe, Pistoll, Bardolffe, and Nym.

Heere is fir *Iohn* himselfe now, looke you.

Fal. Now M. *Shallow*, you'l complaine of me to the councell, I heare.

Shal. Sir *Iohn*, fir *Iohn*, you haue hurt my keeper,
Kild my dogs, stolne my deere.

Fal. But not kissed your keepers daughter.

Shal. Well, this shall be answered.

Fal. Ile answer it strait. I haue done all this.
This is now answered.

Shal. Well, the councell shall know it.

Fal. Twere better for you twere knowne in councell.
You'l be laught at.

Sir Hugh. Good vrdes fir *Iohn*, good vrdes.

Fal. Good vrdes, good cabedge.

Slender I brake your head,
What matter haue you against me ?

Slen. I haue matter in my head against you and your cogging companions, *Pistoll* and *Nym*. They carried me to the tauerne, and made me drunke, and afterward pickt my pocket.

Fal. What say you to this *Pistoll*, did you picke master *Slenders* purse, *Pistoll* ?

Slen. I by this handkercher did he. Two faire shouelboord shillings, beside feuen groats in mill fixpences.

Fal. What say you to this, *Pistoll* ?

Pist.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Pist. Sir *Iohn* and master mine, I combate craue
Of this fame laten bilbo. I do retort the lie
Euen in thy gorge, thy gorge, thy gorge.

Slen. By this light it was he then.

Nym. Sir, my honor is not for many words,
But if you run bace humors of me,
I will say marry trap. And there's the humor of it.

Fal. You heare these matters denide gentlemen,
You heare it.

Enter Mistresse Ford, Mistresse Page, and her daughter Anne.

Pag. No more now,
I thinke it be almost dinner time,
For my wife is come to meete vs.

Fal. Mistresse Foord, I think your name is,
If I mistake not.

Sir Iohn kisses her.

Mis. For. Your mistake sir is nothing but in the mistresse.
But my husbands name is Foord sir.

Fal. I shall desire your more acquaintance.
The like of you, good mistris Page.

Mis. Page. With all my heart sir *Iohn*.
Come husband, will you goe ?
Dinner staies for vs.

Pa. With all my heart, come along gentlemen.

Exit all but Slender and Mistresse Anne.

Anne. Now forsooth, why do you stay me ?
What would you with me ?

Slen. Nay, for my owne part, I would little or nothing with
you. I loue you well, and my vnckle can tell you how my
liuing stands. And if you can loue me, why so. If not,
why then happy man bee his dole.

Anne. You say well, master *Slender*.
But first you must giue me leaue

To

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

To be acquainted with your humor,
And afterward to loue you if I can.

Slen. Why by God there, neuer a man in *Christendome* can
desire more. What, haue you beares in your towne, mistresse
Anne, your dogs barke so?

Anne. I cannot tell master *Slender*, I think there be.

Slen. Ha, how say you? I warrant y'are afeared of a beare
let loose, are you not?

Anne. Yes trust me.

Slen. Now that's meate and drinke to me,
He run to a beare, and take her by the muzzle,
You neuer saw the like.

But indeed I cannot blame you,
For they are maruellous rough things.

Anne. Will you go into dinner, master *Slender*?
The meate staves for you.

Slen. No faith, not I, I thanke you,
I cannot abide the smell of hot meate
Nere since I broke my shin. He tell you how it came
By my troth. A fencer and I plaid three venies
For a dish of stewd prunes, and I with my ward
Defending my head, he hit my shin: yes faith.

Enter Master Page.

Page. Come, good master *Slender*, dinner staies for you.

Slen. I can eate no meate I thanke you.

Page. You shall not chuse, I say.

Slen. He follow you sir, pray leade the way.
Nay by God mistris *Anne*, you shall go first,
I haue more manners then so, I hope.

Anne. Well sir, I will not be troublesome.

Exit omnes.

Enter Sir Hugh and Simple from dinner.

Sir Hugh. Harke you *Simple*, pray you beare this letter
to doctor *Cayus* house, the *French* doctor. He is twell vp
along

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

along the streete, and enquire of his house for one mistress *Quickly*, his woman, or his try nurse, and deliuer this letter to her, it is about M. *Slender*. Looke you, will you do it now?

Sim. I warrant you sir.

Sir Hugh. Pray you do, I must not be absent at the grace. I will go make an end of my dinner,
There is pepions and cheefe behinde.

Exit omnes.

Enter Sir Iohn Falstaffes Host of the Garter, Nym, Bardolfe, Pistoll, and the Boy.

Fal. Mine Host of the Garter.

Host. What says my bully rooke?

Speake schollerly and wisely.

Fal. Mine Host, I must turne away some of my followers.

Host. Discard bully, *Hercules* cashire.

Set them wag, trot, trot.

Fal. I sit at ten pound a weeke.

Host. Thou art an emperor *Cesar*, *Pheffer* and *Kesar* bully.
Ile entertaine *Bardolfe*. He shall tap, he shall draw.
Said I well, bully *Heſtor*?

Fal. Do good mine Host.

Host. I haue spoke. Let him follow. *Bardolfe*,
Let me see thee froth, and lyme.
I am at a word. Follow, follow.

Exit Host.

Fal. Do *Bardolfe*, a tapster is a good trade,
An old cloake will make a new ierkin,
A withered seruingman, a fresh tapster :
Follow him *Bardolfe*.

Bar. I will sir, Ile warrant you Ile make a goode shift to liue.

Exit Bardolfe.

Pif.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Pif. O base gongarian wight, wilt thou the spicket weeld?

Nym. His minde is not heroick. And there's the humor of it.

Fal. Well my laddes, I am almost out at the heeles.

Pif. Why then let cybes ensue.

Nym. I thanke thee for that humor.

Falstaffe. Well, I am glad I am so rid of this tinder boy. His stealth was too open, his filching was like An vnskilful finger, he kept not time.

Nym. The good humour is to steale at a minutes rest.

Pif. Tis so indeed *Nym*, thou hast hit it right.

Falstaffe. Wel, afore God I must cheate, I must conycatch. Which of you knowes *Foord* of this towne?

Pif. I ken the wight, he is of substance good.

Fal. Well my honest lads, Ile tell you what I am about.

Pif. Two yards and more.

Fal. No gibes now *Pistoll*; indeed I am two yards In the waste, but now I am about no waste: Briefly, I am about thrift you rogues you, I do intend to make loue to *Foord*s wife, I espy entertainment in her. She carues, she Discourses, she giues the lyre of inuitation, And euery part to be constured rightly is, I am *Sir Iohn Falstaffes*.

Pif. Hee hath studied her well, out of honesty into *Englilh*.

Fal. Now the report goes,
She hath all the rule of her husbands purse.
She hath legions of angels.

Pif. As many deuils attend her.
And to her boy say I.

Fal. Heeres a letter to her. Heeres another to mistresse
Page.

Who euen now gaue me good eyes too, examined my exteriors with such a greedy intention, with the beames of her beauty,

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

beauty, that it seemed as shee would a scorged me vp like a burning glasse. Heere is another letter to her, she beares the purse too. They shall be exchequers to me, and Ile be cheaters to them both. They shall be my *East* and *West Indies*, and Ile trade to them both. Heere, beare thou this letter to mistris *Foord*. And thou this to mistresse *Page*. Wee'l thriue lads, we will thriue.

Pif. Shall I sir *Panderowes* of *Troy* become?
And by my sword weare Steele.

Then *Lucifer* take all.

Nym. Here, take your humor letter againe,
For my part, I will keepe the hauior
Of reputation. And theres the humor of it.

Fal. Heere sirra, beare me these letters titely,
Saile like my pinnice to the golden shores:
Hence slaues, avant. Vanish like hailstones, goe.
Falstaffe will learne the humor of this age,
French thrift you rogue, my selfe and scirted *Page*.

Exit Falstaffe and the Boy.

Pif. And art thou gone? Teaster Ile haue in pouch
When thou shalt want, base *Phrygian Turke*,

Nym. I haue operations in my head, which are humors of
reuenge.

Pif. Wilt thou reuenge?

Nym. By welkin and her fairies.

Pif. By wit, or sword?

Nym. With both the humors I will disclose this loue to
Page. Ile pofes him with iallowes,
And theres the humor of it.

Pif. And I to *Foord* will likewise tell
How *Falstaffe* varlet vilde,
Would haue her loue, his doue would proue,
And eke his bed defile.

Nym. Let's about it then.

Pif.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Pif. Ile second thee: fir corporall *Nym* troope on.

Exit omnes.

Enter Miftresse Quickly, and Simple.

Quic. M. *Slender* is your masters name fay you?

Sim. I indeed that is his name.

Quick. How fay you. I take it he is somewhat a weakly man:

And he has as it were a whay coloured beard.

Sim. Indeed my masters beard is kane coloured.

Quic. Kane colour, you fay well.

And is this letter from fir *Yon*, about mifttris *Anne*, Is it not?

Sim. I indeed is it.

Quic. So, and your master would haue me as it were to speake to mifttris *Anne* concerning him: I promise you my master hath a great affectioned minde to miftresse *Anne* himfelfe. And if he should know that I should as they fay, giue my verdit for any one but himfelfe, I should heare of it throughly: for I tell you friend, he puts all his priuities in me.

Sim. I by my faith, you are a good stay to him.

Quic. Am I? I if you knew all you'd fay so: Washing, brewing, baking, al goes through my hands, Or else it would be but a woe house.

Sim. I beshrew me, one woman to do all this, Is very painfull.

Quick. Are you aduis'd of that? I, I warrant you, Take all, and pay all, all goe through my hands, And he is such an honest man, if he should chance To come and finde a man heere, we should Haue no hoe with him. Hee's a parlous man.

Sim. Is he indeed?

Quic. Is he, quoth you? God keepe him abroad: Lord blesse me, who knocks there?

For

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

For Gods sake step into the counting-houfe,
While I goe see who's at the doore.

He steps into the counting-houfe.

What *Iohn Rugby*, *Iohn*,
Are you come fir, already?

She opens the doore.

Doct. I be-gar I be forget mine oyntment,
Where be *Iohn Rugby*?

Enter Iohn.

Rug. Heere fir, do you call?

Doct. I you be *Iohn Riugby*, and you be *Iacke Rugby*,
Goe run vp met your heeles, and bring away
De oyntment in the vindoe present :
Make haste *Iohn Rugby*. O I am almost forgot
My simples in a box in de counting-houfe :
O *Iesbu* vat be here, a deuella, a deuella ?
My rapier *Iohn Rugby* ; vat be you, vat make
You in my counting-houfe ?
I tincke you be a teefe.

Quick. *Iesbu* blesse me, we are all vndone.

Sim. O lord fir no : I am no theefe,
I am a seruingman.
My name is *Iohn Simple*, I brought a letter fir
From M. *Slender*, about mistris *Anne Page*
Sir : indeed that is my comming.

Doct. I be-gar is dat all ? *Iohn Rugby* giue a ma pen an
incke : tarche vn pettit tarche a little.

The Doctör writes.

Sim. O God what a furious man is this ?

Quick. Nay it is well he is no worfe :
I am glad he is so quiet.

Doc. Here, giue that same to fir *Hu*, it ber ve challenge
Be-gar tell him I will cut his nase, will you ?

Sim.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Sim. I fir, Ile tell him so.

Doc. Dat be vell, my rapier *John Rugby*, follow may.

Exit Doctor.

Quick. Well my friend, I cannot tarry.

Tell your master Ile do what I can for him,

And so farewell.

Sim. Marry will I, I am glad I am got hence.

Exit omnes.

Enter Mistrisse Page, reading of a letter.

M. Pa. Mistris *Page* I loue you. Ask me no reason,

Because they'r impossible to alledge. You are faire,

And I am fat. You loue sacke, so do I:

As I am sure I haue no mind but to loue,

So I know you haue no hart but to grant

A foldior doth not use many words wher he knowes

A letter may serue for a sentence. I loue you,

And so I leaue you.

Yours, Sir Iohn Falstaffe.

Now *Iesu* blesse me, am I metaphorphosed?

I think I know not my selfe. Why what a Gods name doth this man see in me, that thus he shootes at my honesty? Well, but that I know my owne heart, I should scarcely perswade my selfe I were hand. Why what an vnreasonable woollfacke is this? He was neuer but twice in my company, and if then I thought I gaue such assurance with my eyes, Ide pull them out, they should neuer see more holy-daies. Well, I shall trust fat men the worse while I liue for his sake. O God, that I knew how to be reuenged of him. But in good time, heeres mistris *Foord*.

Enter Mistrisse Foord.

Mif. For. How now mistris *Page*, are you are reading Loue letters? How do you woman?

Mif.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Mis. Pag. O woman, I am I know not what :
In loue vp to the hard eares. I was neuer in such a case in
my life.

Mis. Foord. In loue, now in the name of God with whom?

Mis. Pa. With one that sweares he loues me,
And I must not choose but do the like againe :
I prethee looke on that letter.

Mis. For. Ile match your letter iust with the like,
Line for line, word for word. Onely the name
Of mistresse *Page*, and mistresse *Foord* disagrees :
Do me the kindnesse to looke vpon this.

Mis. Pa. Why this is right my letter.
O most notorious villaine !
Why what a bladder of iniquity is this ?
Let's be reuenged what so ere we do.

Mis. For. Reuenged, if we liue wee'l be reuenged.
O Lord, if my husband should see this letter,
Ifaith this would euen giue edge to his icalousie.

Enter Foord, Page, Pistoll, and Nym.

Mis. Pa. See where our husbands are,
Mine's as far from icalousie,
As I am from wronging him.

Pis. Foord, the words I speake are forc't :
Beware, take heed, for *Falstaffe* loues thy wife ;
When *Pistoll* lyes, do this.

Foord. Why sir, my wife is not young.

Pis. He wooes both yong and old, both rich and poore,
None comes amisse. I say he loues thy wife :
Faire warning do I giue, take heed,
For summer comes, and cuckoo birds appeare ;

Page beleeeue him what he ses. Away sir corporal *Nym.*

Exit Pistoll.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Nym. Sir, the humour of it is, he loues your wife,
I should haue borne the humor letter to her :
I speake, and I auouch tis true : my name is *Nym*.
Farwell, I loue not the humour of bread and cheese,
And there's the humour of it. *Exit Nym.*

Page. The humor of it, quoth you ;
Heeres a fellow frites humor out of his wits.

Mis. Pa. How now sweete hart, how dost thou ?

Enter mistresse Quickly.

Pa. How now man ? how do you mistress *Foord* ?

Mis. Foord. Well I thanke you good M. *Page*.
How now husband, how chance thou art so melancholy ?

Foord. Melancholy, I am not melancholy.
Goe get you in, goe.

Mis. Ford. God saue me, see who yonder is,
Wee'l set her a worke in this businesse.

Mis. Pa. O shee'l serue excellent.
Now you come to see my daughter *Anne* Ime sure.

Quic. I forsooth that's my comming.

Mis. Pa. Come goe in with me. Come mis. *Ford*.

Mis. For. I follow you, mistresse *Page*.

Exit Mi. Ford, Mi. Page, and Quickly.

For. M. *Page*, did you heare what these fellows said.

Pa. Yes master *Ford*, what of that sir ?

For. Do you thinke it is true that they told vs ?

Pag. No by my troth do I not,
I rather take them to be paltry lying knaues,
Such as rather speake of enuy,
Then of any certainty they haue
Of any thing. And for the knight, perhaps
He hath spoke merrily, as the fashion of fat men
Are : But should he loue my wife,

Ifaith

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.]

Ifaith Ide turne her loose to him:
And what he got more of her,
Then ill lookes, and shrewd words,
Why let me beare the penalty of it.

For. Nay I do not mistrust my wife,
Yet Ide be loth to turne them together,
A man may be too confident.

Enter Host and Shallow.

Pa. Heere comes my ramping host of the garter,
There's eyther licker in his head, or mony in his purse,
That he lookes so merrily. Now mine host.

Host. God blesse you my bully rooks, God bles you.
Cauallera iustice I say.

Shal. At hand mine host, at hand M. Ford. god den t'e
God den an twenty good M. Page.

I tell you sir we haue sport in hand.

Host. Tell him cauallera iustice; tell him bully rooke.

Ford. Mine host of the garter.

Host. What saies my bully rooke?

Ford. A word with you sir.

Ford and the Host talkes.

Sh. Harke you sir, Ile tell you what the sport shal be
Doctor Cayus and sir Hugh are to fight,
My merry host hath had the measuring
Of their weapons, and hath appointed them
Contrary places. Harke in your eare.

Host. Hast thou no shute against my knight,
My guest, my cauallera.

For. None I protest: But tell him
My name is Brooke, onely for a iest.

Host. Thy handy bully; thou shalt

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Haue egres and regres, and thy
Name shall be *Brooke* : Sed I well bully hector ?

Shal. I tell you what *M. Page*, I belecue
The doctor is no ieaster, hee'l lay it on :
For though we be iustices and doctors,
And church-men, yet we are
The sonnes of women *M. Page*.

Pa. True master *Shallow*.

Shal. It will be found so master *Page*.

Pa. Master *Shallow*, you your selfe
Haue beene a great fighter,
Though now a man of peace.

Shal. *M. Page*, I haue seene the day that yong
Tall fellowes with their stroke and their passado,
I haue made them trudge master *Page*,
A tis the heart, the heart doth all :
I haue seene the day, with my two hand sword
I would a made you foure tall fencers
Scipped like rats.

Host. Here boyes, shall we wag, shall we wag ?

Shal. Ha with you mine host.

Exit Host and Shallow.

Page. Come *M. Ford*, shall we to dinner ?
I know these fellowes sticks in your minde.

For. No in good sadnesse, not in mine :
Yet for all this Ile try it further,
I will not leaue it so :

Come *M. Page*, shall we to dinner ?

Page. With all my heart sir, Ile follow you.

Exit omnes.

Enter sir Iohn and Pistoll.

Fal. Ile not lend thee a peny.

Pistoll. I will retort the sum in equipage.

Fal.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Fal. Not a peny : I haue bin content you should lay my countenance to pawne : I haue grated vpon my good friends for three repriues, for you and your coach-fellow *Nym*, else you might haue looked thorough a grate like a geminy of baboones. I am damned in hel for swearing to gentlemen y'are good foldiers and tall fellowes : and when mistris *Bridget* lost the handle of her fan, I tooke it on my honesty thou hadst it not.

Pistoll. Didst thou not share ? Hadst thou not fifteen pence ?

Fal. Reason you rogue, reason.

Dost thou thinke Ile endanger my soule gratis ?

In briefe, hang no more about me, I am no gybite for you. A short knife and a throng to your manner of pickt-hatch, goe. You'l not beare a letter for me you rogue you : you stand vpon your honour. Why thou vnconfinable basenesse thou, tis as much as I can doe to keepe the termes of my honor precise. I, I my selfe somtimes, leauing the feare of God on the left hand, am faine to shuffle, to filch and to lurch. And yet you stand vpon your honour, you rogue : you, you.

Pistoll. I do recant, what woldst thou more of man ?

Fal. Well, go too, away, no more.

Enter mistresse Quickly.

Quic. Good you god den sir.

Fal. Good den faire wife.

Quic. Not so ant like your worship.

Fal. Faire maid then.

Quic. That I am Ile be sworne, as my mother was
The first houre I was borne.

Sir, I would speake with you in priuate.

Fal. say on I prethee, heeres none but my owne household.

Quic. Are they so ? Now God blesse them, and make them
his seruants.

Sir, I come from mistris *Foord*.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Fal. So, from mistress *Foord*. Goe on.

Quic. I sir, she hath sent me to you to let you
Vnderstand she hath receiued your letter,
And I tell you, she is one that stands on her credit.

Fal. Well, come mistress *Ford*, mistress *Ford*.

Quic. I sir, and as they say, she is not the first
Hath bene led in a fooles paradise.

Fal. Nay prethee be briefe, my good she *Mercury*

Quic. Marry sir, shee'd haue you meete her
Betweene eight and nine.

Fal. So, betweene eight and nine.

Qu. I forsooth, for then her husband goes a birding.

Fal. Well, commend me to thy mistress, tell her
I will not faile her : boy, giue her my purse.

Quic. Nay sir, I haue another errant to do to you,
From mistress *Page*.

Fal. From mistress *Page* ? I prethee what of her ?

Qu. By my troth I think you work by inchantments.
Else could they neuer loue you as they do.

Fal. Not I, I assure thee ; setting the attraction
Of my good parts aside, I vse no other inchantments.

Quic. Well sir, she loues you extremely,
And let me tell you, shee's one that feares God,
And her husband giues her leaue to do all :
For he is not halfe so iealous as M. *Ford* is.

Fal. But hark thee, hath mistress *Page* and mistress *Ford*
Acquainted each other how dearely they loue me ?

Quic. O God no sir ; there were a iest indeed.

Fal. Well farwell, commend me to mistress *Foord*,
I will not faile her say.

Quic. God be with your worship.

Exit mistresse Quickly.

Enter

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Enter Bardolfe.

Bar. Sir, heeres a gentleman,
One M. *Brooke*, would speake with you,
He hath sent you a cup of sacke.

Fal. M. *Brooke*, hee's welcome, bid him come vp,
Such *Brookes* are alwaies welcome to me:
A *Iacke*, will thy old body yet hold out?
Wilt thou after the expence of so much money,
Be now a gayner? Good booty I thanke thee,
And ile make more of thee then I haue done:
Ha, ha, mistris *Ford*, and mistris *Page*, haue
I caught you ath the hip? Go too.

Enter Ford disguised like Brooke.

For. God saue you sir.

Fal. And you too, would you speake with me?

For. Marry would I sir, I am somewhat bold
To trouble you. My name is *Brooke*.

Fal. Good M. *Brooke*, y'are very welcome.

For. Ifaith sir Ime a gentleman and a traueller,
That haue seene somewhat. And I haue often heard
That if mony goes before, all waies lye open.

Fal. Mony is a good fouldior sir, and will on.

For. Ifaith sir, and I haue a bag here,
Would you would helpe me to beare it.

Fal. O lord, would I could tell how to deserue
To be your porter.

For. That may you easily sir *Iohn*: I haue an earnest
Sute to you. But good sir *Iohn*, when I haue
Told you my grieffe, cast one eye of your owne
Estate, since your selfe knew what tis to be
Such an offender.

Fal. Very well sir, proceed.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

For. Sir, I am deeply in loue with one *Fords* wife of this towne. Now sir *Iohn* you are a gentleman of good discourfing, well beloued among ladies, a man of fuch parts that might win twenty fuch as ſhe.

Fal. Oh good fir.

For. Nay I belecue it fir *Iohn*, for tis time.
Now my loue is fo grounded vpon her,
That without her loue I ſhall hardly liue.

Fal. Haue you importuned her by any meanes?

Foord. No, neuer fir.

Fal. Of what quality is your loue then?

Foord. Ifaith fir, like a faire houſe ſet vpon
Another mans foundation.

Fal. And to what end haue you vnfolded this to me

For. O fir, when I haue told you that, I told you all:
For ſhe fir ſtands ſo pure in the firme ſtate
Of her honeſty, that ſhe is too bright to be looked
Againſt: now could I come againſt her
With ſome deteſtion, I ſhould ſooner perſwade her
From her marriage vow, and a hundred ſuch nice
Tearmes that ſhee'l ſtand vpon.

Fal. Why would it apply well to the veruenſie of your affection,
That another ſhould poſſeſſe what you wold enjoy?
Me-thinks you preſcribe very prepoſterouſly to your ſelfe.

For. No fir, for by that means ſhould I be certain of that
which I now miſdoubt.

Fal. Wel M. *Brook*, Ile firſt make bold with your mony,
Next giue me your hand. Laſtly, you ſhall
If you will, enjoy *Foord*s wife.

Foord. Oh good fir.

Fal. Maſter *Brooke*, I ſay you ſhall.

For. Want no mony fir *Iohn*, you ſhal want none.

Fal.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Fal. Want no mistress *Foord*, master *Brooke*,
You shall want none. Euen as you came to me,
Her spokes mate, her go betweene parted from me ;
I may tell you M. *Brooke*, I am to meete her
Betweene eight and nine, for at that time the iealous
Cuckally knaue her husband will be from home,
Come to me soone at night, you shall know
How I speed, M. *Brooke*.

Ford. Sir, do you know *Foord* ?

Fal. Hang him poore cuckally knaue, I know him not,
And yet I wrong him to call him poore. For they
Say the cuckally knaue hath legions of angels,
For the which his wife seemes to me well fauoured,
And Ile vse her as the key of the cuckally knaues
Coffer, and there's my randeuowes.

Foord. Me-thinks sir it were good that you knew
Foord, that you might shun him.

Fal. Hang him cuckally knaue, Ile stare him
Out of his wits, Ile keepe him in awe
With this my cudgell : it shall hang like a meator
Ore the wittolly knaues head, M. *Brooke* thou shalt
See I will predominate ore the peasant,
And thou shalt lye with his wife. Master *Brooke*,
Thou shalt know him for knaue and cuckold,
Come to me soone at night.

Exit Falstaffe.

Foord. What a damned Epicurian is this ?
My wife hath sent for him, the plot is laid :

Page is an asse, a foole, a secure asse,
Ile sooner trust an Irishman with my
Aquanita bottle. Sir *Hu* our parson with my cheefe,
A theefe to walke my ambling gelding, then my wife
With her selfe : then she plots, then she ruminates,
And what she thinks in her heart she may effect,
Shee'l breake her heart but she will effect it.

God

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

God be praised, God be praised for my iealousie :
Well, Ile go preuent him, the time drawes on,
Better an houre too soone, then a minute too late,
Gods my life, cuckold, cuckold.

Exit Ford.

Enter the Doctor and his Man.

Doct. *John Rugby*, go look met your eyes ore de stal,
And spie and you can see the parson.

Rug. Sir, I cannot tell whether he be there or no,
But I see a great many comming.

Doct. Bully moy, mon rapier *John Rugby*, Be-gar de
Herring be not so dead as I shall make him.

Enter Shallow, Page, Host, and Slender.

Page. God saue you M. doctor *Cayus*.

Shal. How do you master doctor ?

Ho. God blesse the my bully doctor, God bles thee.

Doct. Vat be all you, van to tree come for a ?

Host. Bully to see thee fight, to see thee foine, to see thee
trauerse, to see thee heere, to see thee there, to see thee passe
the punto: the stocke, the reuerse, the distance, the montnce
is a dead my francoyes ? Is a dead my Ethiopian ? Ha, what
saies my Gallon ? my Escuolapis ? Is a dead bullies taile, is
a dead ?

Doct. Be-gar de preest be a coward Iacke knaue,
He dare not shew his face.

Host. Thou art a castallian king, vrinall.

Hector of Greece my boy.

Sha. He hath shewne himfelse the wiser man, M. doctor.
Sir Hugh is a parson, and you a physition. You must
Goe with me, M. doctor.

Host. Pardon bully iustice. A word mounsir mockwater.

Doct. Mockwater, vat be dat ?

Host.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Host. That is in our English tongue, vallor bully, vallor.

Doct. Be-gar den I haue as mockuater as de Inglish Iacke dog, knaue.

Host. He will claperclaw thee titely bully.

Doct. Claperclaw, vat be dat ?

Host. That is, he will make thee amends.

Doct. Begar I do looke he shall claperclaw me den,
And Ile prouoke him to do it, or let him wag :
And moreouer bully, but M. *Page* and M. *Shallow*,
And eke *Cauallera Slender*, go you all ouer the fields to *Frog-*
more.

Pa. Sir *Hugh* is there, is he ?

Host. He is there ; go see what humor he is in,
Ile bring the doctor about by the fields ;
Will it do well ?

Shal. We will do it my host. Farewell M. doctor.

Exit all but the Host and Doctor.

Doct. Be-gar I will kill de cowardly Iack preest,
He is make a foole of moy.

Host. Let him die, but first sheath your impatience,
Throw cold water on your collor, come go with me
Through the fields to *Frogmore*, and Ile bring thee
Where mistris *Anne Page* is feasting at a farm house,
And thou shalt wear her cried game : fed I well bully.

Doct. Begar excellent vel : and if you speake pour moy, I
shall procure you de guefts of all de gentlemē mon patients.
I be-gar I fall.

Host. For the which Ile be thine aduersary
To mistris *Anne Page* : fed I well ?

Doct. I begar, excellent.

Host. Let us wag then.

Doct. Alon, alon, alon.

Exit omnes.

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To mistris *Anne Page* : fed I well ?

Doct. I begar, excellent.

Host. Let us wag then.

Doct. Alon, alon, alon.

Exit omnes.

Enter

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Enter fir Hugh and Simple.

Sir Hu. I pray you do so much as see if you can espy
Doctor *Cayus* comming, and giue me intelligence,
Or bring me vrde if you please now.

Sim. I will sir.

Sir Hu. Ieshu ples me, how my hart trobes and trobes
And then she made him bedes of roses,
And a thousand fragrant poses,
To shallow riuers. Now so kad vdge me, my hart
Swels more and more. Me-thinks I can cry
Very well. There dwelt a man in Babylon,
To shallow riuers and to falles,
Melodious birds sing madrigalles.

Sim. Sir, here is M. *Page*, and M. *Shallow*,
Comming hither as fast as they can.

Sir Hu. Then it is very necessary I put vp my sword,
Pray give me my cowne too, marke you.

Enter Page, Shallow and Slender.

Pa. God saue you sir *Hugh*.

Shal. God saue you M. parson.

Sir Hu. God ples you all frō his mercies fake now.

Page. What, the word and the sword, doth that agree
well?

Sir Hugh. There is reasons and causes in all things,
I warrant you now.

Page. Well sir *Hugh*, we are come to craue
Your helpe and furtherance in a matter.

Sir Hugh. What is it I pray you?

Page. I faith tis this sir *Hugh*. There is an auncient
friend of ours, a man of very good fort, so at ods with one
patience, that I am sure you would hartily grieue to see him.
Now

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Now sir *Hugh*, you are a scholler well red, and very perswasive, we would entreate you to see if you could intreate him to patience.

Sir Hugh. I pray you who is it ? Let vs know that.

Page. Ime sure you know him, tis doctor *Cayus*.

Sir Hug. I had as leeu you should tell me of a messe of porredge.

He is an arrant lowsie beggerly knaue :
And he is a coward beside.

Page. Why Ile lay my life tis the man
That he should fight withall.

Enter Doctor and the Host, they offer to fight.

Shal. Keep them asunder, take away their weapons.

Host. Disarme, let them question.

Shal. Let them keepe their limbes hole, and hacke our English.

Doct. Harke van vrd in your eare : you be vn daga
And de Iack coward preest.

Sir Hugh. Harke you, let vs not be laughing stockes to other mens humors. By Ieshu I will knock your vrinals about your knaues coxcomb, for missing your meetings and appointments.

Doct. O Ieshu, mine host of the garter, *Iohn Rugby*,
Haue not I met him at de place he make apoint,
Haue I not ?

Sir Hu. So kad vdge me, this is the pointment place,
Witnesse by my host of the garter.

Host. Peace I say *Gawle* and *Gawlia*, *French* and *Welch*,
Soule-curer and body-curer.

Doct. This be very braue, excellent.

Host. Peace I say, heare mine host of the garter,
Am I wise ? am I polliticke ? am I Matchauill ?

Shal

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Shal I lose my doctor? No, he giues me the motions
And the potions. Shal I lose my parson, my fir *Hugh*?
No, he giues me the prouerbs, and the nouerbs :
Giue me thy hand terrestiall,
So giue me thy hand celestiall :
So boys of art I haue deceiu'd you both,
I haue directed you to wrong places,
Your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole,
Bardolfe, lay their swords to pawne.
Follow me lads of peace, follow me.
Ha, ra, la. Follow.

Exit. Host.

Shal. Afore God a mad host, come let's goe.

Doct. I be-gar, haue you mocka may thus?

I will be euen met you my Iack host.

Sir Hugh. Giue me your hand doctor *Cayus*,
We be all friends:

But for mine hosts foolish knauery, let me alone.

Doct. I dat be vell begar, I be friends.

Exit omnes.

Enter master Foord.

For. The time drawes on he shold come to my house
Well wife, you had best worke closely,
Or I am like to goe beyond your cunning :
I now will seeke my guests that come to dinner,
And in good time, see where they all are come.

Enter Shallow, Page, Host, Slender, Doctor, and sir Hugh.

By my faith a knot well met : y'are welcome all.

Page. I thanke you good M. *Foord*.

For. Welcome good M. *Page*.

I would your daughter were here.

Page. I thanke you fir, she is very well at home.

Slend.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Slend. Father *Page*, I hope I haue your consent
For mistress *Anne*.

Pag. You haue sonne *Slender*, but my wife here,
Is altogether for master doctor.

Doct. Be-gar I tanke her heartily.

Host. But what say you to yong master *Fenton*?
He capers, he dances, he writes verses, he smels
All April and May: he will cary it, he will carit,
Tis in his betmes he will carite.

Pa. My host not with my consent:
The gentleman is wilde, he knowes too much:
If he take her, let him take her simply;
For my goods goes with my liking,
And my liking goes not that way.

For. Well, I pray go home with me to dinner:
Besides your cheare, Ile shew you wonders:
Ile shew you a monster. You shall go with me
M. Page, and so shall you sir *Hugh*,
And you master doctor.

Sir Hu. If there be one in the company, I shall make two.

Doct. And dere be ven two, I fall make de tird.

Sir Hugh. In your teeth for shame.

Shal. Well, well, God be with you, we shall haue the fairer
wooing at *M. Pages*. *Exit Shallow and Slender.*

Host. Ile to my honest knight sir *John Falstaffe*,
And drinke Canary with him. *Exit host.*

For. I may chance to make him drink in pipe wine,
First come gentlemen. *Exit omnes.*

*Enter mistresse Foord, with two of her men, and a great
buck-basket.*

Mis. For. Sirra, if your M. aske you whither
You carry this basket, say to the landerers,
I hope you know how to bestow it.

Ser. I warrant you mistress.

Exit seruant.

Mis. For.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Mif. For. Go get you in. Well fir *Iohn*,
I beleue I shall serue you such a tricke,
You shall haue little minde to come againe.

Enter Sir Iohn.

Fal. Haue I caught my heauenly iewell?
Why now let me dye. I haue liued long enough,
This is the happy houre I have desired to see,
Now shall I sin in my wish,
I would thy husband were dead.

Mif. For. Why how then fir *Iohn*?

Fal. By the Lord, Ide make thee my lady.

Mif. For. Alasse fir *Iohn*, I should be a very simple lady.

Fal. Goe too, I see how thy eye doth emulate the diamond.
And how the arched bent of thy brow
Would become the ship tire, the tire vellet,
Or any Venetian attire, I see it.

M. For. A plaine kercher fir *Iohn* would fit me better.

Fal. By the Lord thou art a traitor to say so:
What made me loue thee? Let that perswade thee
There's some-what extraordinary in thee:
Goe too, I loue thee:
Mistris Foord, I cannot cog, I cannot prate,
Like one of these fellows that smels like
Bucklers bery, in simple time,
But I loue thee, and none but thee.

M. For. Sir *Iohn*, I am afraid you loue mistris *Page*.

Fal. I, thou mightst as well say
I loue to walke by the Counter-gate,
Which is as hatefull to me
As the reake of a lime kill.

Enter Mistresse Page.

M. Page. *Mistris Ford*, *mistris Ford*, where are you?

M. Ford.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Mis. For. O Lord step aside good sir *John*.

Falstaffe stands behinde the arras.

How now mistress *Page*, what's the matter ?

Mis. Pa. Why your husband woman is coming,
With halfe *Windsor* at his heeles,
To looke for a gentleman, that he saies
Is hid in this house : his wives sweet-heart.

Mis. For. Speake louder. But I hope tis not true mistress *Page*.

Mis. Pa. Tis too true woman. Therefore if you haue any
heere, away with him, or y'are vndone for euer.

Mis. For. Alasse mistress *Page*, what shall I do ?
Heeres a gentleman my friend, how shall I do ?

Mis. Page. Gods body woman, do not stand what shall I do,
and what shall I do. Better any shift, rather then you
shamed. Looke here, heer'es a buck-basket, if he be a man
of any reasonable size, hee'l in heere.

Mis. For. Alasse, I feare he is to big.

Fal. Let me see, let me see, Ile in, Ile in,
Follow your friends counsell.

Mis. Page. Fie sir *John*, is this your loue ? Go too.

Fal. I loue thee, and none but thee :
Helpe me to conuey me hence,
Ile neuer come heere more.

*Sir John goes into the basket, they put cloathes ouer him, the
two men carries it away : Foord meets it, and all the rest,
Page, Doctor, Priest, Slender, Shallow.*

Ford. Come pray along, you shall see all.
How now who goes heere ? Whither goes this ?
Whither goes it ? set it downe.

Mis. Ford. Now let it go, you had best meddle with buck-
washing.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Ford. Buck, good bucke, pray come along,
Master *Page*, take my keyes : helpe to search.
Good sir *Hugh* pray come along, helpe a little,
A little, Ile shew you all.

Sir Hu. By *Iesbu* these are iealousies and distempers.

Exit omnes.

Mis. Page. He is in a pittifull taking.

Mis. Foord. I wonder what he thought
When my husband bad them set downe the basket.

Mis. Page. Hang him dishonest slaue, we cannot vse
Him bad enough. This is excellent for your
Husband's iealousie.

Mis. For. Alas poore soule, it grieues me at the hart,
But this will be a meanes to make him cease
His iealous fits, if *Falstaffes* loue increase.

M. Page. Nay we will send to *Falstaffe* once againe,
Tis great pittie we should leaue him so :
What, wiues may be merry, and yet honest too.

M. Ford. Shall we be condemnd because we laugh ?
Tis old, but true ; still sowes eate all the drasse.

Enter all.

M. Pa. Here comes your husband, stand aside.

For. I can finde no body within, it may be he lyed.

Mis. Page. Did you heare that ?

Mis. Ford. I, I, peace.

For. Well, Ile not let it go so, yet Ile try further.

Sir Hu. By *Iesbu* if there be any body in the kitchin
Or the cuberts, or the presse, or the buttery,
I am an arrant *Iew* : now God plesse me :
You serue me well, do you not ?

Page. Fie *M. Ford*, you are too blame.

Mis. Page. Ifaith tis not well *M. Ford* to suspect her thus
without a cause.

Doct.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Doct. No by my trot it be no vell.

For. Well, I pray beare with me, *M. Page* pardon me
I suffer for it, I suffer for it.

Sir Hu. You suffer for a bad conscience, look you now.

Foord. Well, I pray no more, another time Ile tell you all :
The meane time go dine with me, pardon me wife,
I am sorry ; *M. Page*, pray go in to dinner,
Another time Ile tell you all.

Pa. Well let it be so, and to morrow I inuite you all to
my house to dinner : and in the morning wee'l a birding, I
haue an excellent hawke for the bush.

Ford. Let it be so : come *M. Page*, come wife ;
I pray you come in all, y'are welcome, pray come in.

Sir Hugh. By so kad vdge me, *M. Foord* is not in his right
wits. *Exit omnes.*

Enter sir Iohn Falstaffe, and Bardolfe.

Fal. *Bardolfe*, brew me a pottle of sacke presently.

Bar. With Egges sir ?

Falstaff. Simply of it selfe, Ile none of these pullets sperme
in my drinke : goe make haste. Haue I liued to be carried
in a basket and throwne into the *Thames* like a barow of
butchers offoll. Well, if I be serued such another tricke, Ile
giue them leave to take out my braines and butter them, and
giue them to a dog for a new-yeares gift. Sbloud, the rogues
slided me in with as little remorse as if they had gone to
drowne a blinde bitches puppies in the litter : and they might
know by my size I haue a kinde of alacrity in sinking : if the
bottome had bin as deep as hell I should down. I had bene
drowned, but that the shore was sheluie and somewhat shal-
low : a death that I abhorre. For you know the water swels
a man : and what a thing should I haue bene when I had
bene swelled ? By the Lord a mountain of money. Now is
the sacke brewed ?

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Bar. I fir, there's a woman below would speak with you.

Fal. Bid her come vp. Let me put some sack among this cold water, for my belly is as cold as if I had swallowed snow-bals for pilles.

Enter mistresse Quickly.

Now what's the newes with you ?

Quic. I come from mistris *Foord* forfooth.

Fal. Mistris *Ford*, I haue had *Ford* enough,
I haue bene throwne into the *Foord*,
My belly is full of *Foord* : she hath tickled me.

Quic. O Lord fir, she is the sorrowfullest woman that her seruants mistooke, that euer liued. And fir, she would desire you of all loues you will meete her once againe, to morrow fir, betweene ten and eleuen, and she hopes to make amends for all.

Fal. Ten and eleuen, saist thou ?

Quic. I forfooth.

Fal. Well, tell her Ile meet her. Let her but think
Of mans frailty : let her iudge what man is,
And then thinke of me. And so farwell.

Quic. You'l not faile fir ? *Exit mistris Quickly.*

Fal. I will not faile. Commend me to her.
I wonder I heare not of M. *Brooke*, I like his
Mony well. By the masse heere he is.

Enter Brooke.

Ford. God saue you fir.

Fal. Welcome good M. *Brook*. You come to know how matters goes.

Ford. That's my coming indeed fir *Iohn*.

Fal. Master *Brooke* I will not lye to you fir,
I was there at my appointed time.

For. And how sped you fir ?

Fal. Very ilfauouredly fir.

For. Why fir, did she change her determination ?

Fal.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Fal. No *M. Brooke*, but you shall heare. After we had kissed and imbraced, and as it were amid the prologue of our encounter, who should come, but the iealous knaue her husband, and a rabble of his companions at his heeles, thither prouoked and instigated by his distemper. And what to do thinke you ? to search for his wiues loue. Euen so, plainly so.

For. While ye were there ?

Fal. Whilst I was there.

For. And did he search and could not finde you ?

Fal. You shall heare sir, as God would haue it,
A little before comes me one *Pages* wife,
Giues her intelligence of her husbands
Approch : and by her inuention, and *Fords* wiues
Distraction, conueyed me into a buck-basket.

Ford. A buck-basket !

Fal. By the Lord a buck-basket, ram'd me in
With foule shirts, stockins, greasie napkins,
That *M. Brooke*, there was a compound of the most
Villanous smell, that euer offended nostrill.
Ile tell you *M. Brooke*, by the Lord for your sake
I suffered three egregious deaths : first to be
Crammed like a good bilbow, in the circumference
Of a pack, hilt to point, heele to head : and then to
Be stewed in my owne grease like a *Dutch* dish ;
A man of my kidney ; by the Lord it was maruell
I escaped suffication ; and in the heate of all this,
To be throwne into *Thames* like a horschoe hot :
Maister Brooke, thinke of that hissing heate,
Maister Brooke.

Foord. Well sir, then my sute is voide,
You'l vndertake it no more ?

Fal. *Maister Brooke*, Ile be throwne into *Etna*
As I haue beene in the *Thames*,
Ere thus I leaue her : I haue receiued

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Another appointment of meeting,
Betweene ten and eleuen is the houre.

Ford. Why sir, tis almost ten already.

Fal. Is it? why then I will addresse my selfe
For my appointment: *M. Brooke*, come to me
Soone at night, and you shall know how I speed,
And the end shall be, you shall enjoy her loue:
You shall cuckold *Foord*: come to me soone at night.

Exit Falstaffe.

Ford. Is this a dreame? Is it a vision?
Master *Ford*, master *Ford*, awake master *Ford*;
There is a hole made in your best coat *M. Ford*.
And a man shall not onely endure this wrong,
But shall stand vnder the taunt of names,
Lucifer is a good name, *Barbason* good: good
Diuels names: but cuckold, wittoll, godso,
The diuell himselfe hath not such a name:
And they may hang hats heere, and napkins heere
Vpon my hornes: well Ile home, Ile ferit him,
And vnlesse the diuell himselfe should aide him.
Ile search vnpossible places: Ile about it,
Leaft I repent too late.

Exit omnes.

Enter M. Fenton, Anne Page, and mistresse Quickly.

Fen. Tell me sweet *Nan*, how dost thou yet resolue,
Shall foolish *Slender* haue thee to his wife?
Or one as wise as he, the learned doctor?
Shall such as they enjoy thy maiden heart?
Thou knowst that I haue alwayes loued thee deare,
And thou hast oft-times swore the like to me.

Anne. Good *M. Fenton*, you may assure your selfe
My heart is setled vpon none but you,
Tis as my father and mother please:
Get their consent, you quickly shall haue mine.

Fen. Thy father thinks I loue thee for his wealth,
Though I must needs confesse at first that drew me,

But

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

But since thy vertues wiped that trash away,
I loue thee *Nan*, and so deare is it set,
That whilst I liue, I nere shall thee forget.

Quick. Gods pittie here comes her father.

Enter M. Page, his wife, M. Shallow, and Slender.

Page. *M. Fenton*, I pray what make you heere ?
You know my answer sir, shee's not for you :
Knowing my vow, too blame you are to vse me thus.

Fen. Pray heare me speake sir.

Page, Pray sir get you gone :
Come hither daughter, sonne *Slender*
Let me speake with you.

They whisper.

Quick. Speake to mistris *Page*.

Fen. Pray mistris *Page* let me haue your consent.

Mis. Pa. Ifaith *M. Fenton* tis as my husband please,
For my part, Ile neyther hinder you, nor further you.

Quick. How say you, this was my doings.
I bad you speake to mistris *Page*.

Fen. Here nurse, theres a brace of angels to drink,
Worke what thou canst for me, farwell. *Exit Fenton.*

Quick. By my troth so I will, good hart.

Pa. Come wife, you and I will in, wee'l leaue *M. Slender*
And my daughter to talke together. *M. Shallow,*
You may stay sir if you please. *Exit Page and his Wife.*

Shal. Marry I thank you for that :
To her cousin, to her.

Slen. Ifaith I know not what to say.

Anne. Now *M. Slender*, what's your will ?

Slen. Godefo, there's a ieast indeed :
Why mistris *Anne* I neuer made will yet :
I thanke God I am wise enough for that.

Shal. Fie cusse fie, thou art not right,
O thou hadst a father.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Slen, I had a father mistress *Anne*, good vnckle
Tell the iest how my father stole the goose out of
The henloft. All this is nought,
Harke you mistresse *Anne*.

Shal. Hee will make you ioynter of three hundred pound
a yeare, he shall make you a gentlewoman.

Slend. I by God that I will, come cut and longtaile, as
good as is any in *Glostershire*, vnder the degree of a squire.

Anne. O God, how many grosse faults are hid
And couered in three hundred pound a yeare?

Well M. *Slender*, within a day or two Ile tell you more.

Slen. I thanke you good mistress *Anne*; vnckle I shal haue
her.

Quic. M. *Shallow*, M. *Page* would pray you to come in,
and you M. *Slender*, and you mistress *Anne*.

Slen. Well nurse, if you'l speake for me,
Ile giue you more than Ile talke of. *Exit all but Quickly*.

Quic. Indeed I will, Ile speake what I can for you,
But specially for master *Fenton*,
But specially of all for my master.

And indeed I will do what I can for them all three. *Exit*.

Enter mistress Foord and her two men.

Mis. For. Do you heare? when your master comes take up
this basket as you did before, and if you master bid you set
it downe, obey him.

Ser. I will forfooth.

Enter sir Iohn.

Mis. Foord. Sir *Iohn*, welcome.

Fal. What, are you sure of your husband now?

Mis. Foord. He is gone a birding sir *Iohn*, and I hope will
not come yet.

Enter

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Enter mistress Page.

Gods body here is mistress *Page*,
Step behinde the arras good sir *Iohn*.

He steps behinde the arras.

Mis. Pa. Mistress *Foord*, why woman your husband is in
his old vaine againe, hee's comming to search for your sweet-
heart, but I am glad he is not here.

Mis. For. O God mistress *Page*, the knight is here,
What shall I do?

Mis. Pa. Why then y'are vndone woman,
Vnlesse you make some meanes to shift him away.

Mis. For. Alasse I know no meanes,
Vnlesse we put him in the basket againe.

Fal. No Ile come no more in the basket,
Ile creep vp into the chimney,

Mis. For. There they use to discharge their fowling peeces.

Fal. Why then Ile go out of doores.

Mis. Pa. Then you are vndone, y'are but a dead man.

Fal. For Gods sake deuise any extremity,
Rather then a mischiefe.

Mis. Pa. Alasse I know not what meanes to make,
If there were any womans apparell would fit him,
He might put on a gown and a muffler,
And so escape.

Mis. For. That's well remembred, my maids *Ant
Gillian* of *Brainford*, hath a gowne aboue.

Mis. Pa. And she is altogether as fat as he.

Mis. For. I that will serue of my word.

Mis. Pa. Come goe with me sir *Iohn*.
Ile helpe to dresse you.

Fal. Come for Gods sake, any thing.

Exit mis. Page, and sir Iohn

Enter

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Enter Foord, Page, Hugh, Shallow, the two men carries the basket: and Foord meets it.

For. Come along I pray, you shall know the cause,
How now, whither goe you? Ha, whither go you?
Set downe the basket you flauē,
You panderly rogue fet it downe.

Mis. For. What is the reason that you vse me thus?

For. Come hither, fet downe the basket,
Mistris Foord the modest woman,
Mistris Foord the vertuous woman,
She that hath the iealous foole to her husband,
I mistrust you without cause, do I not?

Mis. For. I God's my record do you,
If you mistrust me in any ill fort.

Foord. Well fed brazen face, hold it out,
You youth in a basket, come out heere,
Pull out the cloathes, search.

Hu. Ieshu ples me, will you pvl vp your wiues cloths.

Pa. Fie *M. Foord*, you are not to go abroad if you be in
these fits.

Sir Hugh. So kad vdge me, tis very necessary
He were put in pethlem.

For. M. Page, as I am an honest man *M. Page*,
There was one conueyd out of my house here yesterday out of
this basket, why may he not be here now?

Mis. For. *Mistris Page*, bring the olde woman downe.

For. Olde woman, what olde woman?

Mis. Foord. Why my maids *Ant, Gillian of Brainford.*

For. A witch, haue I not fore-warnd her my house?
Alasse we are simple we, we know not what
Is brought to passe vnder the color of fortune-telling.
Come downe you witch, come downe.

Enter

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Enter Falstaffe disguised like an olde woman, and mistress Page with him him, Foord beates him, and he runs away.

Away you witch, get you gone.

Hu. By Ieshu I verily thinke she is a witch indeed,
I espied vnder her muffler a great beard.

Foord. Pray come helpe me to search, pray now.

Page. Come, wee'l go for his mindes sake. *Exit omnes.*

Mis. For. By my troth he beate him most extremely.

Mis. Pa. I am glad of it, what shall we proceede any further?

Mis. For. No faith, now if you will let vs tell our husbands of it. For mine I me sure hath almost fretted himselfe to death.

Mis. Pa. Content, come wee'l go tell them all,
And as they agree, so will we proceed. *Exit both.*

Enter Host and Bardolfe.

Bar. Sir, heere be three gentlemen come from the Duke the stranger sir, would haue your horse.

Host. The duke, what duke? let mee speake with the gentlemen, do they speake English?

Bar. Ile call them to you sir.

Host. No *Bardolfe*, let them alone, Ile sauce them;
They haue had my house a weeke at command,
I haue turned away my other guests,
They shall haue my horses *Bardolfe*,
They must come off, Ile sawce them. *Exit omnes.*

Enter Foord, Page, and their wiues, Shallow, Slender, and sir Hugh.

Ford. Well wife, here take my hand, vpon my soule I loue thee dearer then I do my life, and ioy I haue so true and constant wife, my iealousie shall neuer more offend thee.

Mis.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Mif. For. Sir I am glad, and that which I haue done,
Was nothing else but mirth and modesty.

Page. I mistris *Ford*, *Falstaffe* hath all the greefe,
And in this knauery my wife was the chiefe.

Mif. Pa. No knauery husband, it was honest mirth.

Hugh. Indeed it was good pastimes and merriments.

Mif. Foord. But sweet-heart shall we leaue old *Falstaffe* so?

Mif. Page. O by no means, fend to him againe.

Page. I do not thinke hee'l come, being so much deceiued.

Foord. Let me alone, Ile to him once againe like *Brooke*,
and know his minde whether hee'l come or not.

Page. There must be some plot laide, or hee'l not come.

Mif. Page. Let vs alone for that. Heare my deuice.

Oft haue you heard since *Horne* the hunter dyed,

That women to affright their little children,

Saies that he walkes in shape of a great stag.

Now for that *Falstaffe* hath bene so deceiued,

As that he dares not venter to the house,

Wee'l fend him word to meete vs in the field,

Disguised like *Horne*, with huge hornes on his head,

The houre shal be iust betweene twelue and one,

And at that time we will meete him both:

Then would I haue you present there at hand,

With little boyes disguised and drest like fairies,

For to affright fat *Falstaffe* in the woods.

And then to make a period to the iest,

Tell *Falstaffe* all, I thinke this will do best.

Page. Tis excellent, and my daughter *Anne*
Shall like a little fairy be disguised.

Mif. Page. And in that maske Ile make the doctor steale
my daughter *Anne*, and ere my husband knowes it, to carry
her to church, and marry her.

Mif. Foord. But who will buy the filkes to tyre the boyes?

Page.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Page. That will I do, and in a robe of white
Ile cloathe my daughter, and aduertise *Slender*
To know her by that signe, and steale her thence,
And vnknowne to my wife, shall marry her.

Hu. So kad vdge me the deuice is excellent,
I will also be there, and will be like a iackanapes,
And pinch him most cruelly for his lecheries.

Mis. Pa. Why then we are reuenged sufficiently:
First he was carried and throwne into the *Thames*,
Next beaten well, I me sure you'l witnesse that.

Mis. For. Ile lay my life this makes him nothing fat.

Page. Well, lets about this stratagem, I long
To see deceit deceiu'd, and wrong haue wrong.

For. Well send to *Falstaffe*, and if he come thither,
Twill make vs smile and laugh one month together.

Exit omnes.

Enter Host and Simple.

Ho. What would thou haue boore, what thick-skin?
Speake, breathe, discusse, short, quick, brieft, snap.

Sim. Sir, I am sent from my M. to sir *Iohn Falstaffe*.

Host. Sir *Iohn*, there's his castle, his standing-bed, his trundle-bed, his chamber is painted about with the story of the prodigall, fresh and new, goe knocke, hee'l speake like an Antripophigian to thee:
Knocke I say.

Sim. Sir I should speake with an old woman that went vp into his chamber.

Host. An old woman, the knight may be robbed, Ile call bully knight, bully sir *Iohn*. Speake from thy lungs military: it is thine host, thy *Ephesian* calles.

Fal. Now mine host,

He speakes aboue.

Host. Here is a *Bohemian Tartar* bully, tarries the comming
downe

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

downe of the fat woman : Let her descend bully, let her descend, my chambers are honourable, pah priuafie, fie.

Fal. Indeed mine host there was a fat woman with me, but she is gone.

Enter sir Iohn.

Sim. Pray sir, was it not the wise woman of *Brainford* ?

Fal. Marry was it musselshel, what would you ?

Sim. Marry sir my master *Slender* fent me to her,
To know whether one *Nym* that hath his chaine,
Cousened him of it, or no.

Fal. I talked with the woman about it:

Sim. And I pray you sir what ses she ?

Fal. Marry she ses the very same man
That beguiled master *Slender* of his chaine,
Cousened him of it.

Sim. May I be bold to tell my master so sir ?

Fal. I tike, who more bolde.

Sim. I thanke you sir, I shall make my master a glad man
at these tydings, God be with you sir. *Exit.*

Host. Thou art clarkly sir *Iohn*, thou art clarkly,
Was there a wise woman with thee ?

Fal. Marry was there mine host, one that taught me more
wit then I learned this seuen year, and I paid nothing for it,
but was paid for my learning.

Enter Bardolfe.

Bar. O lord sir, coufenage, plaine coufenage.

Host. Why man, where be my horses ?
Where be the *Germanes* ?

Bar. Rid away with your horses :
After I came beyond *Maiden-head*,
They flung me in a flow of myre, and away they ran.

Enter

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Enter Doctor.

Doct. Where be my host de gartir?

Host. O here sir in perplexity.

Doct. I cannot tell vad be dad,
But be-gar I will tell you van ting,
Dear be a *Germane* duke come to de court,
Has cosened all the hosts of *Brainford*,
And *Redding* : be-gar I tell you for good will,
Ha, ha, mine host, am I euen met you?

Exit.

Enter sir Hugh.

Sir Hugh. Where is mine host of the garter?
Now my host, I would desire you looke you now,
To haue a care of your entertainments,
For there is three sorts of cosen garmombles,
Is cosen all the host of *Maiden-head* and *Redings*,
Now you are an honest man, and a scuruy beggerly lowfie
knaue beside,
And can point wrong places,
I tell you for good will, grate why mine host.

Exit.

Host. I am cosened *Hugh*, and coy *Bardolfe*,
Sweete knight assist me, I am cosened.

Exit.

Fal. Would all the world were cosened for me,
For I am cosened and beaten too,
Well, I neuer prospered since I forswore
Myselfe at *Primero* : and my winde
Were but long enough to say my prayers,
Ide repent, now from whence come you?

Enter mistresse Quickly.

Quic. From the two parties forsooth.

Fal. The diuell take the one party,
And his dam the other,

And

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

And they'l be both bestowed :
I haue endured more for their sakes,
Then man is able to endure.

Quic. O lord sir, they are the sorrowfull creatures
That euer liued : specially mistris *Foord*,
Her husband hath beaten her that she is all
Blacke and blew poore foule.

Fal. What tellest me of blacke and blew,
I haue beaten all the colours in the rainbow,
And in my escape like to haue bin apprehended
For a witch of *Brainford*, and set in the stockes.

Quic. Well sir, she is a sorrowfull woman,
And I hope when you heare my errant,
You'l be perswaded to the contrary.

Fal. Come go with me into my chamber,
And Ile heare thee.

Exit omnes.

Enter Host and Fenton.

Host. Speake not to me sir, my mind is heauy,
I haue had a great losse.

Fen. Yet heare me, and as I am a gentleman,
Ile giue you a hundred pound toward your losse.

Host. Well sir Ile heare you, and at least keep your counsell.

Fen. Then thus my host. Tis not vnknown to you,
The feruent loue I beare to young *Anne Page*,
And mutually her loue againe to me :
But her father still against her choise,
Doth seeke to marry her to foolish *Slender*,
And in a robe of white this night disguised,
Wherein fat *Falstaffe* had a mighty scare,
Must *Slender* take her and carry her to *Catlen*,
And there vnknown to any, marry her.
Now her mother's still against that match,
And firme for doctor *Cayus*, in a robe of red

By

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

By her deuce, the doctor must steale her thence,
And she hath giuen consent to goe with him.

Host. Now which meanes she to deceiue,
Father or mother?

Fen. Both my good host, to go along with me.
Now here it rests, that you would procure a priest,
And tarry ready at the appointed place,
To giue our hearts vnited matrimony.

Host. But how will you come to steale her from among
them?

Fen. That hath sweete *Nan* and I agreed vpon,
And by a robe of white, the which she wears,
With ribbons pendant flaring bout her head,
I shall be sure to know her, and conuey her thence,
And bring her where the priest abides our comming,
And by thy furtherance there be married.

Host. Well, husband your deuce, Ile to the vicar,
Bring you the maide, you shall not lacke a priest.

Fen. So shall I euermore be bound vnto thee,
Besides Ile always be thy faithfull friend. *Exit omnes.*

Enter sir Iohn with a bucks head vpon him.

Fal. This is the third time, well Ile venter,
They say there is good lucke in odde numbers,
Ioue transform'd himselfe into a bull,
And I am heere a stag, and I thinke the fattest
In all *Windsor* Forrest: well, I stand heere
For *Horne* the hunter, waiting my does comming.

Enter mistresse Page and mistresse Foord.

Mis. Page. Sir *Iohn*, where are you?

Fal. Art thou come my doe? What and thou too?
Welcome ladies.

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Mis. For. I sir *Iohn*, I see you will not faile,
Therefore you deserue far better then our loues,
But it grieues me for your late crosses.

Fal. This makes amends for all.
Come diuide me betweene you, each a hanch,
For my hornes, Ile bequeath them to your husbands,
Do I speake like *Horne* the hunter, ha ?

Mis. Pa. God forgiue me, what noife is this ?

There is a noife of hornes, the two women run away.

Enter sir Hugh like a satyr, and boyes drest like fairies, mistress Quickly, like the queen of fairies : they sing a song about him, and afterward speake.

Qui. You fayries that do haunt these shady groues
Looke round about the wood if you can espy
A mortall that doth haunt our sacred round :
If such a one you can espy, giue him his due,
And leaue not till you pinch him blacke and blew :
Giue them their charge *Puck* ere they part away.

Sir Hugh. Come hither *Peane*, goe to the country houses,
And when you finde a slut that lyes asleepe,
And all her dishes foule, and roome vnswept,
With your long nailes pinch her till she cry,
And sweare to mend her sluttish huswifery.

Fai. I warrant you I will performe your will.

Hu. Wher's *Pead*? Go and see wher brokers sleep,
And Fox-eyed seriants with their mace,
Goe lay the proctors in the street,
And pinch the lowsie seriants face:
Spare none of these when th'are a bed,
But such whose nose looks blew and red.

Quic. Away be gone, his mind fulfill,
And looke that none of you stand still.

Some

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Some do that thing, some do this,
All do something, none amis.

Sir Hugh. I smell a man of middle earth.

Fal. God blesse me from that *Welch* fairy.

Quic. Look euery one about this round,
And if that any here be found,
For his presumption in this place,
Spare neither legge, arme, head, nor face.

Sir Hugh. See I haue spied one by good lucke,
His body man, his head a buck.

Fal. God send me good fortune now, and I care not.

Quick. Go strait, and do as I command,
And take a taper in your hand,
And set it to his fingers ends,
And if you see it him offends,
And that he starteth at the flame,
Then is he mortall, know his name:
If with an F. it doth begin,
Why then be sure hee's full of sinne.
About it then, and know the truth,
Of this fame metamorphosed youth.

Sir Hugh. Giue me the tapers, I will try
And if that he loue venery.

They put the torches to his fingers, and he starts.

Sir Hugh. Tis right indeed, he is full of lecheries and iniquitie.

Quick. A little distant from him stand,
And euery one take hand in hand,
And compasse him within a ring,
First pinch him well, and after sing.

Here they pinch him, and sing about him, and the Doctor comes one way and steales away a boy in red. And Slender another way, he takes a boy in greene : And Fenton steales

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

mistris Anne, beeing in white. And a noise of hunting is made within; and all the Fairies run away. Falstaffe puls off his bucks head, and rises vp. And enters M. Page, M. Foord, and their wiues, M. Shallow, sir Hugh.

Fal. Horne the hunter quoth you: am I ghost?
Sblood the fairies hath made a ghost of me:
What, hunting at this time at night?
Ile lay my life the mad prince of *Wales*
Is stealing his fathers deare.
How now who haue we here, what is all *Windfor* stirring?
Are you there?

Shal. God saue you sir *Iohn Falstaffe*.

Sir Hugh. God plesse you sir *Iohn*, God plesse you.

Page. Why how now sir *Iohn*, what a paire of hornes in your hand?

For. Those horns he meant to place vpon my head,
And *M. Brooke* and he should be the men:
Why how now sir *Iohn*, why are you thus amazed?
We know the fairies man that pinched you,
Your throwing in the *Thames*, your beating well,
And what's to come sir *Iohn*, that can we tell.

Mis. Pa. Sir *Iohn* tis thus, your dishonest meanes
To call our credits into question,
Did make vs vndertake to our best,
To turne your lewd lust to a merry iest.

Fal. Iest, tis well, haue I liued to these yeares
To be gulled now, now to be ridden?
Why then these were not fairies?

Mis. Page. No sir *Iohn*, but boyes.

Fal. By the lord I was twice or thrice in the minde
They were not, and yet the grofenesse
Of the foppery perswaded me they were.
Well, if the fine wits of the court heare this,

They'l

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

They'l so whip me with their keene ieafts,
That they'l melt me out like tallow,
Drop by drop out of my greafe. Boyes!

Sir Hu. I trust me boyes fir *John*, and
I was also a fairy that did helpe to pinch you.

Fal. I, tis well I am your May-pole,
You haue the start of me,
Am I written too with a *Welch* goate?
With a peece of toasted cheefe?

Sir Hugh. Butter is better then cheefe fir *John*,
You are all butter, butter.

For. There is a further matter yet fir *John*,
There's 20 pound you borrowed of *M. Brooke* fir *John*,
And it must be paid to *M. Foord* fir *John*.

Mis. For. Nay husband let that go to make amends,
Forgiue that sum, and so wee'l all be friends.

For. Well here's my hand, all is forgiuen at last.

Fal. It hath cost me well,
I haue beene well pinched and washed.

Enter the Doctor.

Mis. Pa. Now *M. Doctor*, sonne I hope you are.

Doct. Sonne, be-gar you be de ville voman,
Be-gar I tinck to marry metres *Anne*, and begar
Tis a whorson garson Iackboy.

Mis. Page. How, a boy?

Doct. I be-gar a boy.

Page. Nay be not angry wife, Ile tell thee true,
It was my plot to deceiue thee so:
And by this time your daughter is married
To *M. Slender*, and see where he comes.

Enter Slender.

Now sonne *Slender*, wher'es your bride?

A PLEASANT COMEDY, OF

Slen. Bride, by Gods lyd I thinke there's neuer a man the worell hath that crosse fortune that I haue: by God I could cry for very anger.

Page. Why what's the matter sonne *Slender*?

Slen. Sonne, nay by God I am none of your sonne.

Page. No, why so?

Slen. Why so God saue me, tis a boy that I haue married.

Page. How, a boy? why did you mistake the word?

Slen. No neyther, for I came to her in red as you bad me, and I cried mum, and he cried budget, so well as euer you heard, and I haue married him.

Sir Hugh. Iesbu M. *Slender*, cannot you see but marry boyes?

Page. O I am vext at heart, what shall I do?

Enter Fenton and Ann Page.

Mis. Pa. Here comes he that hath deceiu'd vs all, How now daughter, where haue you bin?

Anne. At church forsooth.

Page. At church, what haue you done there?

Fen. Married to me, nay sir neuer storme, Tis done sir now, and cannot be vndone.

Foord. Ifaith M. *Page* neuer chafe your selfe, She hath made her choise wheras her hart was fixt, Then tis in vaine for you to storme or fret.

Fal. I am glad yet that your arrow hath glanced.

Mis. For. Come mistris *Page*, Ile be bold with you, Tis pittie to part loue that is so true.

Mis. Page. Although that I haue missed in my intent. Yet I am glad my husbands match was crossed, Here M. *Fenton*, take her, and God giue thee ioy.

Sir Hugh. Come M. *Page*, you must needs agree.

For. Ifaith sir come, you see your wife is pleased.

Pa.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

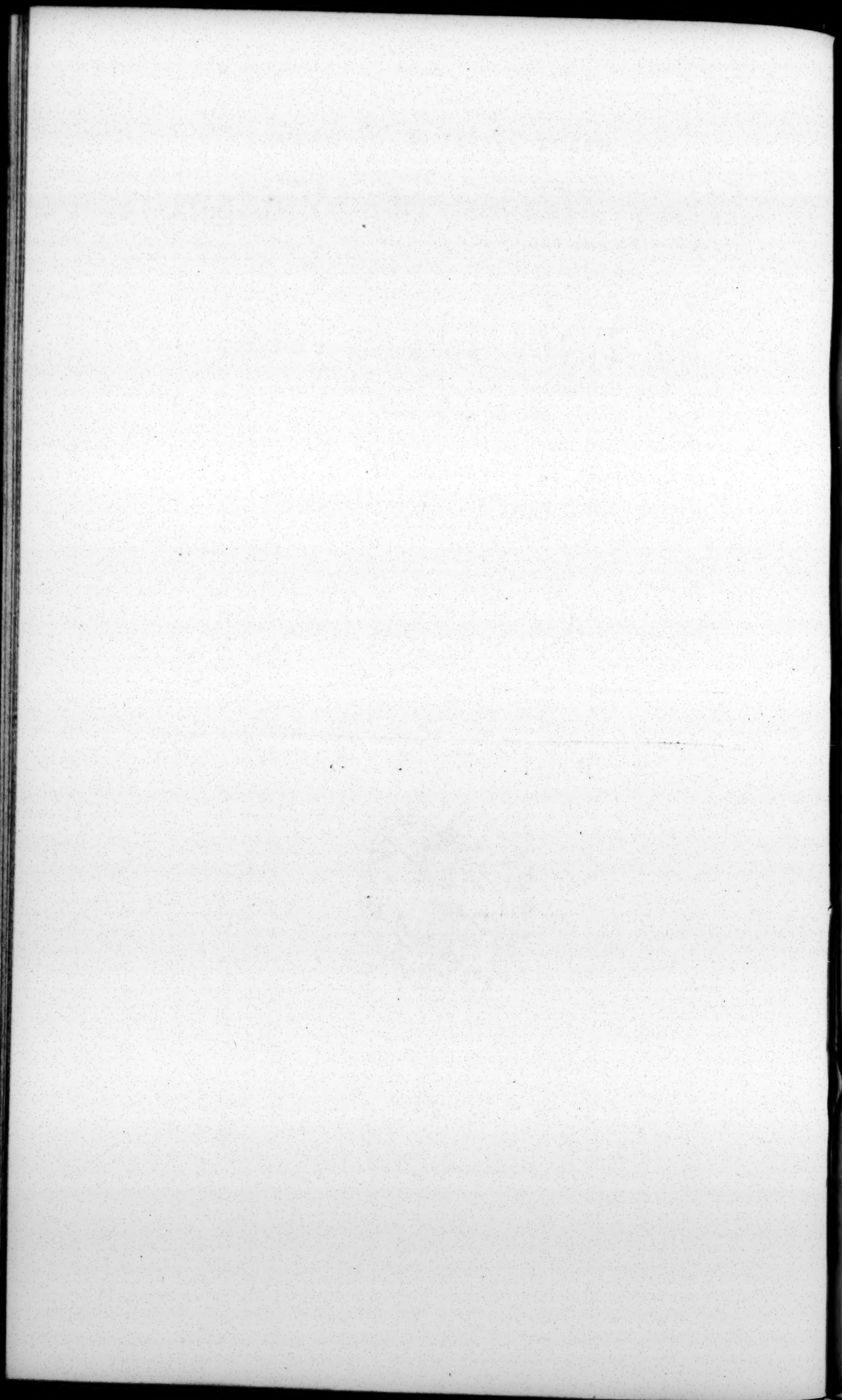
Pa. I cannot tell, and yet my hart's well eased,
And yet it doth me good the doctor missed.
Come hither *Fenton*, and come hither daughter,
Go too, you might haue staied for my good will,
But since your choise is made of one you loue,
Here take her *Fenton*, and both happy proue.

S. Hugh. I wil dance and eate plums at your wedding.

For. All parties pleased, now let's in to feast,
And laugh at *Slender* and the doctors ieast.
He hath got the maiden, each of you a boy
To waite vpon you, so God giue you ioy,
And sir *Iohn Falstaffe* now you shall keep your word,
For *Brooke* this night shall lye with mistris *Ford*.

Exit omnes.

F I N I S.



T H E
Merry Wives of Windsor.

With the HUMOURS of
Sir IOHN FALSTAFFE,

A S A L S O,
The Swaggering Vaine of Ancient PIS-
TOLL, and Corporall NYM.

W R I T T E N B Y
WILLIAM SHAKE-SPEARE.

Newly Corrected.



L O N D O N :

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T H E

Merry Wives of Winfor.

Actus primus, Scena prima.

Enter Iustice Shallow, Slender, fir Hugh Euans, master Page, Falstoffs, Bardolph, Nym, Pistoll, Anne Page, mistress Ford, mistress Page, Simple.

Shallow.

SIR Hugh, perswade mee not : I will make a star-chamber matter of it, if he were twenty fir *Iohn Falstoffs*, hee shall not abuse *Robert Shallow* esquire.

Slen. In the county of *Glocester*, iustice of peace and coram.

Shal. I (cosen *Slender*) and *Cust-alorum*.

Slen. I, and *Rotulorum* too ; and a gentleman borne (master parson) who writes himselfe *armigero*, in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *armigero*.

Shal. I that I doe, and haue done any time these three hundred yeeres.

Slen. All his successors (gone before him) hath don't : and all his ancestors (that come after him) may : they may giue the dozen white luses in their coate.

Shal. It is an olde coate.

Euans. The dozen white lowses do become an olde coat well : it agrees well passant : it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies loue.

Shal.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Shal. The lufe is the fresh-fish, the salt-fish is an old coate.

Slen. I may quarter (coz).

Shal. You may, by marrying.

Euans. It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.

Shal. Not a whit.

Euan. Yes per-lady : if hee ha's a quarter of your coate, there is but three shirts for your selfe, in my simple coniectures ; but that is all one : if sir *Iohn Falstaffe* haue committed disparagements vnto you, I am of the church and will be glad to doe my beneuolence, to make attonements and compremises betweene you.

Shal. The Councill shall heare it, it is a riot.

Euan. It is not meet the councill heare a riot : there is no feare of Got in a riot : the councill (looke you) shall desire to heare the feare of Got, and to heare a riot : take your viza-ments in that.

Shal. Ha ; o' my life, if I were yong againe, the sword should end it.

Euans. It is petter that friends is the sword, and end it : and there is also another deuice in my praine, which perad-venture prings goot discretions with it. There is *Ann Page*, which is daughter to master *Thomas Page*, which is pretty virginity.

Slen. Mistris *Anne Page* ? shee has browne haire, and speakes small like a woman.

Euans. It is that ferry person for all the world, as iust as you will desire, and seuen hundred pounds of moneies, and gold, and siluer, is her grand-fire vpon his deaths-bed (Got deliuer to a ioyful resurrections) giue, when she is able to ouertake seuentene yeeres old. It were a goot motion, if we leaue our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage betweene master *Abraham*, and mistris *Anne Page*.

Slen. Did her grand-fire leaue her seauen hundred pound ?

Euan. I, and her father is make her a petter penny.

Slen.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Slen. I know the young gentlewoman, she has good gifts.

Euan. Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is good gifts.

Shal. Wel, let vs see honest master *Page* is *Falstaffe* there ?

Euan. Shall I tell you a lye ? I doe despise a lyer, as I doe despise one that is false ; or as I despise one that is not true : the knight sir *John* is there, and I beseech you be ruled by your well-willers : I will peat the doore for master *Page*. What hoa ? Got-plese your house heere.

Master Page. Who's there ?

Euan. Here is go't's plesing and your friend, and iustice *Shallow*, and heere young master *Slender* : that peraduentures shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.

Master Page. I am glad to see your worships well : I thanke you for my venison master *Shallow*.

Shal. Master *Page*, I am glad to see you : much good doe it your good heart : I wish'd your venison better, it was ill killed : how doth good mistresse *Page* ? and I thanke you alwaies with my heart, la : with my heart.

M. Page. Sir, I thanke you.

Shal. Sir, I thanke you : by yea, and no I doe.

M. Pa. I am glad to see you, good master *Slender*.

Slen. How do's your fallow greyhound, sir, I heard say he was out-run on *Cotfall*.

M. Pa. It could not be iudg'd, sir,

Slen. You'll not confesse ; you'll not confesse.

Shal. That he will not, 'tis your fault : 'tis your fault : 'tis a good dogge.

M. Pa. A Cur, sir.

Shal. Sir : hee's good dog, and a faire dog, can there be more said ? he is good and faire Is sir *John Falstaffe* heerr ?

M. Pa. Sir hee is within : and I would I could doe a good office betweene you.

Euan. It is spoke as a Christians ought to speake.

Shal. He hath wrong'd me master *Page*.)

M. Pa.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Ma. Pa. Sir, he doth in some sort confesse it.

Shal. If it be confessed, it is not redressed ; is not that so (*M. Page* ?) he hath wrong'd me, indeed he hath, at a word he hath : beleue me, *Robert Shallow* Esquire, faith hee is wronged.

Ma. Pa. Here comes sir *John*.

Fal. Now, Master *Shallow*, you'll complaine of me to the king ?

Shal. Knight, you haue beaten my men, kill'd my deere, and broke open my lodge.

Fal. But not kifs'd your keeper's daughter ?

Shal. Tut, a pin : this shall be answer'd.

Fal. I will answer it strait, I haue done all this : That is now answer'd.

Shal. The councell shall know this.

Fal. 'Twere better for you if it were known in councell : you'll be laugh'd at.

Eu. Pauca-verba ; (sir *John*) good worts.

Fal. Good worts ? good cabidge ; *Slender*, I broke your head : what matter haue you against me ?

Slen. Marry sir, I haue matter in my head against you, and against your cony-catching rascals, *Bardolf*, *Nym*, and *Pistoll*.

Bar. You *Banbery* cheese.

Slen. I, it is no matter.

Pist. How now, *Mephastophilus* ?

Slen. I, it is no matter.

Nym. Slice, I say ; *pauca*, *pauca* : slice, that's my humor.

Slen. Where's *Simple* my man ? can you tell, cosen ?

Euan. Peace, I pray you : now let vs vnderstand : there is three vmpires in this matter, as I vnderstand ; that is, master *Page* (fidelicet master *Page*,) and there is my selfe, fidelicet my selfe) and the three party is (lastly, and finally) mine host of the garter.

Ma. Pa. We three to heare it, and end it between them :

Euan. Ferry goo't, I will make a priefe of it in my note-booke,

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

booke, and we will afterwards orke vpon the cause, with as great discreetly as we can.

Fal. Pistoll.

Pist. He heares with eares.

Euan. The teuill and his tam : what phrase is this ? hee heares with eare ? why, it is affectations.

Fal. Pistoll, did you picke M. *Slenders* purse ?

Slen. I, by these gloues did he, or I would I might neuer come in mine owne great chamber againe else, of seauen groates in mill-sixpences, and two *Edward* shouelboards, that cost me two shilling and two pence a peece of *Yead Miller* : by these gloues.

Fal. Is this true, *Pistoll* ?

Euan. No, it is false, if it is a picke-purse.

Pist. Ha, thou mountaine forreyner : sir *John*, and master mine, I combat challenge of this Latine bilboe : word of deniall in thy *labras* here ; word of deniall ; froth and scum thou lieft.

Slen. By these gloues, then 'twas he.

Nym. Be auis'd sir, and passe good humours : I will say marry trap with you, if you runne the nut-hooks humor on me, that is the very note of it.

Slen. By this hat, then hee in the red face had it : for though I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunke, yet I am not altogether an asse.

Fal. What say you *Scarlet*, and *John* ?

Bar. Why sir, (for my part) I say the gentleman had drunke himselfe out of his five sentences.

Eu. It is his five fences : fie, what the ignorance is.

Bar. And being fap, sir, was (as they say) casheerd : and so conclusions past the car-cires.

Slen. I, you spake in Latten then to : but 'tis no matter : He nere be drunke whilst I liue againe, but in honest, ciuill, godly company for this tricke : if I be drunke, He bee drunke
with

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

with those that haue the feare of God, and not with drunken knaues.

Euan. So got udge me, that is a vertuous minde.

Fal. You heare all these matters den^d, gentlemen; you heare it.

Ma. Pa. Nay daughter, carry the wine in, wee'll drinke within.

Slen. Oh heauen: This is mistresse *Anne Page*:

Master Page. How now mistris *Ford*?

Fal. Mistris *Ford*, by my troth you are very well met: by your leaue good mistris.

Master Page. Wife bid these gentlemen welcome: come, we haue a hot venison pasty to dinner; come gentlemen, I hope we shall drinke downe all vnkindnesse.

Slen. I had rather then forty shillings I had my booke of songs and sonnets heere: How now *Simple*, where haue you beene? I must wait on my selfe, must I? you haue not the booke of riddles about you, haue you?

Sim. Booke of riddles? why did you not lend it to *Alice Short-cake* vpon Alhallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas.

Shal. Come coz, come coz, wee stay for you: a word with you coz. marry this there is as 'twere a tender, a kinde of tender, made a farre-off by sir *Hugh* here: do you vnderstand me?

Slen. I Sir, you shall finde me reasonable, if it be so, I shall doe that that it reason.

Shal. Nay, but vnderstand me.

Slen. So I doe sir.

Euan. Giue eare to his motions; (master *Slender*) I will description the matter to you, if you be capacity of it.

Slen. Nay, I will doe as my cozen *Shallow* saies: I pray you pardon me, he's a iustice of peace in his countrie, simple though I stand here.

Euan.

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Euan. But that is not the question : the question is concerning your marriage.

Shal. I, there's the point sir.

Eu. Marry is it : the very point of it, to mist. *Anne Page.*

Slen. Why if it be so ; I will marry her vpon any reasonable demands.

Eu. But can you affection the 'o man, let vs command to know that of your mouth, or of your lips : for diuers philosophers hold, that the lips is parcell of the mouth : therefore precisely, can you carry your good will to the maide ?

Shal. Cosen *Abraham Slender*, can you loue her ?

Slen. I hope sir, I will doe as it shall become one that would doe reason.

Euan. Nay, got's lords, and his ladies, you must speake possitable, if you can carry-her your desires towards her.

Shal. That you must.

Will you, (vpon good dowry) marry her ?

Slen. I will doe a greater thing then that, vpon your request (cosen) in any reason.

Shal. Nay conceiue mee, conceiue mee, (sweet coz) : what I doe is to pleasure you (coz) can you loue the maide ?

Slen. I will marry her (sir) at your request ; but if there be no great loue in the beginning, yet heauen may decrease it vpon better acquaintance, when wee are married, and haue more occasion to know one another ; I hope vpon familiarity will grow more content ; but if you say mary-her, I will mary-her, that I am freely dissolued, and dissolutely.

Euan. It is a fery discretion-answer ; saue the fall is in the 'ord, dissolutely ; the ort is (according to our meaning) resolutely : his meaning is good.

Sh. I, I thinke my cosen meant well.

Slen. I or else I would I might be hang'd (la.)

Sh. Here comes faire mistris *Anne* ; would I were yong for your sake, mistris *Anne*.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

An. The dinner is on the table, my father desires your worships company.

Sh. I will wait on him, (faire mistress *Anee*.

Euan. Od's plessed-will ; I will not be absence at the grace.

An. Wil't please your worship to come in, sir ?

Sl. No, I thanke you forsooth, hartely ; I am very well.

An. The dinner attends you sir.

Sl. I am not a hungry, I thanke you, forsooth ; goe sirha, for all you are my man, goe waite vpon my cosen *Shallow* ; a iustice of peace sometime may be beholding to his friend, for a man ; I keepe but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead ; but what though, yet I liue like a poore gentleman borne.

An. I may not goe in without your worship ; they will not fit till you come.

Slen. I'faith, ile eate nothing, I thanke you as much as though I did.

Anne. I pray you sir walke in.

Slen. I had rather walke here (I thanke you) I bruiz'd my shin th' other day, with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence (three veneyes for a dish of stew'd prunes) and by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs barke so ? be there beares ith' towne.

An. I thinke there are, sir, I heard them talk'd of.

Slen. I loue the sport well, but I shall as soone quarrell at it, as any man in *England*, you are afraid if you see the beare loose, are you not ?

An. I indeede sir.

Slen. That's meate and drinke to me now ; I haue seene *Sackerfon* loose, twenty times, and haue taken him by the chaine, but (I warrant you) the women haue so cride and shrekt at it, that it past. But women indeede, cannot abide 'em, they are very ill-fauour'd rough things.

Ma. Pa.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Ma. Pa. Come, gentle *M. Slender*, come ; we stay for you.

Slen. Ile eate nothing, I thanke you sir.

Ma. Pa. By cocke and pie, you shall not choose, sir : come, come.

Slen. Nay, pray you lead the way.

Ma. Pa. Come on sir.

Slen. Mistris *Anne* : your selfe shall goe first.

An. Not I sir, pray you keepe on.

Slen. Truly I will not goe first, truly-la : I will not doe you that wrong.

An. I pray you sir.

Slen. Ile rather be vnmannarly, then troublesome, you do your selfe wrong indeede la. *Exeunt.*

Scena Secunda.

Enter Euans and Simple.

Euan. Go your wayes, and aske of doctour *Caius* house, which is the way ; and there dwels one mistris *Quickly* ; which is in the manner of his nurse ; or his dry-nurse ; or his cooke ; or his laundry ; his washer, and his ringer.

Si. Well sir.

Euan. Nay, it is petter yet ; giue her this letter ; for tis a'oman that altogeathers acquaintance with mistris *Anne Page* ; and the letter is to desire, and require her to folicite your masters desires, to mistris *Anne Page*. I pray you bee gon : I will make an end of my dinner ; ther's pippins and cheese to come. *Exeunt.*

Scena Tertia.

Enter Falstaffe, Host, Bardolfe, Nym, Pistoll, Page.

Fal. Mine host of the garter ?

Ho. What saies my Bully Rooke ? speake schollerly, and wisely.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Fal. Truly mine host ; I must turne away some of my followers.

Ho. Discard (bully *Hercules*) casheere ; let them wag ; trot, trot.

Fal. I sit at ten pounds a weeke.

Ho. Thou'rt an emperor (*Cesar, Keiser and Pheazar*) I will entertaine *Bardolfe* ; he shall draw ; he shall tap ; said I well (bully *Heſtor* ?)

Fa. Doe so (good mine host.)

Ho. I haue spoke, let him follow, let me see thee froth, and liue : I am at a word : follow.

Fal. *Bardolfe*, follow him ; a tapster is a good trade, an old cloake, makes a new ierkin, a wither'd seruingman, a fresh tapster ; goe, adew.

Ba. It is a life that I haue desir'd, I will thriue.

Pis. O base *Hungarian* wight, wilt thou the spigot wield ;

Ni. He was gotten in drinke, is not the humor conceited.

Fal. I am glad I am so acquit of this tinderbox, his thefts were too open, his filching was like an vnskillfull finger, he kept not time.

Nim. The good humor is to steale at a minutes rest.

Pist. Conuay, the wise it call : steale ? foh : a fico for the phrase.

Fal. Well sirs, I am almost out at heeles.

Pis. Why then let kibes ensue.

Fal. There is no remedy : I must conicatch, I must shift.

Pist. Yong rauens must haue foode.

Fal. Which of you know *Ford* of this towne ?

Pist. I ken the wight ; he is of substance good.

Fal. My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

Pist. Two yards, and more.

Fal. No quips now *Pistoll* ; (indeed I am in the wast two yards about ; but I am now about no waste : I am about thrift) briefly ; I doe meane to make loue to *Fords* wife ; I
spie

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

spie entertainment in her, shee discourses, shee craues, she giues the leere of inuitation ; I can construe the action of her familiar stile, and the hardest voice of her behauior (to be english'd rightly) is *I am sir Iohn Falstafs*.

Pist. He hath studied her will ; and translated her will out of honesty, into English.

Ni. The anchor is deepe ; will that humor passe ?

Fal. Now, the report goes, she has all the rule of her husbands purse ; he hath a legend of angels.

Pist. As many diuels entertaine ; and to her boy say I.

Ni. The humor rises it is good ; humor me the angels.

Fal. I haue writ me here a letter to her ; and here another to *Pages* wife, who euen now gaue me good eyes too ; examin'd my parts with most iudicious illiads ; sometimes the beame of her view, guilded my foote, sometimes my portly belly.

Pist. Then did the sun on dung-hill shine.

Ni. I thanke thee for that humour.

Fal. O she did so course o're my exteriors with such a greedy intention, that the appetite of her eye, did seeme to scorch mee vp like a burning-glasse ; here's another letter to her ; she beares the purse too ; shee is a region in *Guiana* ; all gold, and bountie ; I will be cheaters to them both, and they shall be exchequers to mee ; they shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both ; goe, beare thou this letter to mistress *Page* ; and thou this to mistress *Ford* ; wee will thriue (lads) wee will thriue.

Pist. Shall I sir *Pandarus* of *Troy* become,
And by my side weare steele ? then Lucifer take all.

Ni. I will run no base humor ; here take the humor-letter ; I will keepe the hauior of reputation.

Fal. Hold Sirha, beare you these letters rightly,
Saile like my pinnasse to these golden shores.
Rogues, hence, auant, vanish like haile-stones ; goe,

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Trudge; plod away ith' hoofe : seeke shelter, packe,
Falstaffe will learne the honor of the age,
French thrift, you rogues, my selfe, and skirted *Page*.

Pist. Let vultures gripe thy guts, for gourd, and Fullam
holds, and high and low beguiles the rich and poore,
Tester ile haue in pouch when thou shalt lacke,
Base *Phrygian* Turke.

Ni. I haue opperations.
Which be humours of reuenge ?

Pist. Wilt thou reuenge ?

Ni. By welkin, and her star.

Pist. With wit, or steele ?

Ni. With both the humors, I ;
I will discusse the humour of this loue to *Ford*.

Pist. And I to *Page* shall eke vnfold
How *Falstaffe* (varlet vile)
His doue will proue ; his gold will hold,
And his soft couch defile.

Ni. My humor shall not coole ; I will incense *Ford*, to
deale with poyson ; I will possesse him with yallownesse, for
the reuolt of mine is dangerous ; that is my true humour.

Pist. Thou art the *Mars* of malecontents ; I second thee ;
troope on. *Exeunt.*

Scoena Quarta.

Enter mistress Quickly, Simple, Iohn Rugby, doctor Caius,
Fenton.

Qu. What, *Iohn Rugby*, I pray thee goe to the casement,
and see if you can see my master, master doctor *Caius* com-
ming ; if he do (I'faith) and finde any body in the house ;
here will be an old abusing of Gods patience, and the kings
English.

Ru. Ile goe watch.

Qu.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Qu. Goe, and we'll haue a posset for't soone at night, (in faith) at the latter end of a sea-cole-fire : An honest, willing, kinde fellow, as euer seruant shall come in house withall : and I warrant you, no tel-tale, nor no breede-bate : his worst fault is, that he is giuen to prayer ; hee is something peeuisht that way : but no body but has his fault : but let that passe. *Peter Simple*, you say your name is ?

Si. I, for fault of a better.

Qu. And master *Slender's* your master ?

Si. I forsooth.

Qui. Do's he not weare a great round beard, like a glouers paring-knife ?

Si. No forsooth, he hath but a little wee-face ; with a little yellow beard, a caine colourd beard.

Qu. A softly-sprighted man, is he not ?

Si. I forsooth, but he is as tall a man of his hands, as any is betweene this and his head ; hee hath fought with a war-rener.

Qu. How say you ; oh, I should remember him, do's hee not hold vp his head (as it were ?) and strut in his gate ?

Si. Yes indeede do's he.

Qu. Well, heauen send *Anne Page*, no worfe fortune, tell master parson, *Euans*, I will doe what I can for your master ; *Anne* is a good girle, and I wish——

Ru. Out alas, here comes my master.

Qu. Wee shall all be shent ; run in here, good young man, goe into this cloffet : he will not stay long ? what *John Rugby* ? *John* ; what *John* I say ? goe *John*, goe enquire for my master, I doubt hee be not well, that hee comes not home, (and downe, downe downe'a, &c.

Ca. Vat is you sing ? I doe not like des toyes, pray you goe and vetch me in my clofft, vnboyteene verd ; a box, a greene-a-box ; do intend vat I speake ? greene-a-box.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Qu. I forsooth ile fetch it you :

I am glad hee went not in himselfe : if hee had found the yong man he would haue beene horne-mad.

Ca. *Fe, fe, fe, fe, mai foy, il fait for chando, le man voi a le court la grand affaires.*

Qu. Is it this fir.

Ca. *Ouy mette le au mon pocket, de-peeche Quickly :*
Vere is dat knaue *Rugby* ?

Qu. What *Iohn Rugby*, *Iohn* ?

Ru. Here fir.

Ca. You are *Iohn Rugby*, and you are *Iacke Rugby*, come take your rapier, and come after my heele to the court:

Ru. 'Tis ready fir, here in the porch.

Ca. By my trot, I tarry too long, od's-me : *que ay ie oublie* dere is some simples in my closset, dat I vill not for the varld I shall leaue behinde.

Qu. Ay-me, he'll finde the yong man there, and be mad.

Ca. O diable, diable ; vat is in my closset ?

Villaine, la-roone ; *Rugby*, my rapier.

Qu. Good master be content.

Ca. Wherefore shall I be content-a ?

Qu. The yong man is an honest man.

Ca. What shall de honest man do in my closset, here is no honest man dat shall come in my closset.

Qu. I beseech you be not so flegmaticke ; heare the truth of it. He came of an errand to mee, from parson *Hugh*.

Ca. Vell.

Si. I forsooth : to desire her to——

Qu. Peace, I pray you.

Ca. Peace-a-your tongue : speake-a-your tale.

Si. To desire this honest gentlewoman (your maid) to speake a good word to mistris *Anne Page*, for my master in the way of marriage.

Qu. This is all indeed-la : but ile nere put my finger in the fire, and neede not.

Qu.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Ca. Sir *Hugh* send-a you ? *Rugby*, ballow me some paper : tarry you a littell-a while.

Qui. I am glad hee is so quiet : if hee had bin thoroughly moued, you should haue heard him so loud, and so melancholly ; but notwithstanding man, Ile doe yoe your master what good I can ; and the very yea, and the no is that *French* doctor my master, (I may call him my master, looke you, for I keepe his house ; and I wash, ring, brew, bake, scowre, dresse meate and drinke, make the beds, and doe all my felfe.)

Simp. 'Tis a great charge to come vnder one bodies hand.

Qui. Are you a uis'd o' that ? you shall finde it a great charge : and to be vp early, and downe late ; but notwithstanding, (to tell you in your eare, I would haue no words of it) my master himfelfe is in loue with mistris *Anne Page* ; but notwithstanding that I know *Ans* mind, that's neither heere nor there.

Caius. You, iack 'nape ; giue-'a this letter to sir *Hugh*, by Gar it is a challenge : I will cut his troat in de Parke and I will teach a scuruy iack-a-nape priest to meddle, or make :— you may be gon : it is not good you tarry here ; by Gar I will cut all his two stones ; by Gar, he shall not haue a stone to throw at his dogge.

Qui. Alas, he speakes but for his friend.

Caius. It is no matter'a ver dat ; do not you tell-a-me dat I shall haue *Anne Page* for my felfe ? by Gar, I vill kill de iacke priest ; and I haue appointed mine host of de iarteer to measure our weapon, by Gar, I will my felfe haue *Anne Page*.

Qui. Sir, the maide loues you, and all shall bee well ; wee must giue folkes leaue to prate ; what the good-ier.

Caius. *Rugby*, come to the court with me : by Gar, if I haue not *Anne Page*, I shall turne your head out of my dore : follow my heeles, *Rugby*.

Qui.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Qui. You shall haue *An*-fooles head of your owne ; no, I know *Ans* mind for that ; neuer a woman in *Windfor* knowes more of *Ans* minde than I doe, nor can doe more then I doe with her, I thanke heauen.

Fenton. Who's within there, hoa ?

Qui. Who's there, I troa ? Come neere the house I pray you.

Fen. How now (good woman) how dost thou ?

Qui. The better that it pleases your good worship to aske ?

Fen. What newes ? how do's pretty mistress *Anne* ?

Qui. In truth sir, and shee is pretty, and honest, and gentle, and one that is your friend, I can tell you that by the way, I praise heauen for it.

Fen. Shall I doe any good thinkst thou ? shall I not loose my suit ?

Qui. Troth sir, all is in his hands aboue ; but notwithstanding (master *Fenton*) Ile be sworne on a booke she loues you ; haue not your worship a wart aboue your eye ?

Fen. Yes marry haue I, what of that ?

Qui. Well, thereby hangs a tale ; good faith, it is such another *Nan* ; (but (I detest) an honest maid as euer broke bread : we had an howres talke of that wart ; I shall neuer laugh but in that maids company, but (indeed) shee is giuen too much to allicholy and musing ; but for you——well——goe too——

Fen. Well, I shall see her to day ; hold, there's money for thee. . Let mee haue thy voice in my behalfe ; if thou seest her before me, commend me.—

Qui. Will I ? I faith that wee will ; and I will tell your worship more of the wart, the next time we haue confidence, and of other wooers.

Fen. Well, fare-well, I am in great haste now.

Qui. Fare-well to your worship ; truely an honest gentleman : but *Anne* loues him not, for I know *Ans* minde as well as another do's, out vpon't, what haue I forgot. *Exit.*

ACTUS

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

ACTUS SECUNDUS.

Scoena Prima.

*Enter mistress Page, mistress Ford, master Page, master Ford,
Pistol, Nim, Quickly, Host, Shallow.*

Mi. Page. What, haue I scap'd loue-letters in the holly-day-time of my beauty, and am I now a subiect for them ? Let me see.

Aske me no reason why I loue you, for though I loue vse reason for his precisian, hee admits him not for his counsaillour : you are not young, no more am I : goe to then, there's simpathe : you are merry, so am I : ha, ha, then there's more simpathe : you loue sacke, and so doe I : would yout desire better simpathe ? Let it suffice thee (mistress Page) at the least if the loue of souldier can suffice, that I loue thee : I will not say pittie mee, 'tis not a souldier-like phrase ; but I say loue me :

*By me, thine owne true knight, by day or night :
Or any kinde of light, with all his might,
For thee to fight,* John Falstaffe.

What a *Herod* of *Iurie* is this ? O wicked, wicked world. One that is well-nye wore to peeces with age To show himselfe a young gallant ? What an vnwaied Behauiour hath this *Flemish* drunkard pickt (with The deuills name) out of my conuersation, that hee dares in this mannner assay me ? why, hee hath not been thrice in my company, what should I say to him ? I was then frugall of my mirth : (heauen forgiue mee,) why ile exhibit a bill in the parliament for the putting downe of men, how shall I be reueng'd on him ? for reueng'd I will be ? as sure as his guts are made of puddings.

Mis.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Mis. Ford. Mistris *Page*, trust me, I was going to your house.

Mis. Page. And trust me, I was going to you : you looke very ill.

Mis. Ford. Nay, ile nere belieue that; I haue to shew to the contrary.

Mis. Page. 'Faith but you doe in my minde.

Mis. Ford. Well : I doe then ; yet I say, I could shew you to the contrary; O mistris *Page*, giue me some counsaile.

Mis. Page. What's the matter, woman ?

Mis. Ford. O woman ; if it were not for one trifling respect, I could come to such honour.

Mis. Page. Hang the trifle (woman) take the honour ; what is it ? dispende with trifles ; what is it ?

Mis. Ford. If I would but goe to hell, for an eternall moment, or so ; I could be knighted.

Mis. Page. What thou liest ? sir *Alice Foord* ? these knights will hacke, and so thou shouldst not to alter the article of thy gentry.

Mis. Ford. Wee burne day-light ; heere, read, read ; perceiue how I might be knighted, I shall thinke the worse of fat men, as long as I haue an eye to make difference of mens liking ; and yet hee would not sweare : praise womens modesty ; and gaue such orderly and welbehaued reproofe to all vncomelinessse, that I would haue sworn his disposition would haue gone to the truth of his words : but they doe no more adhere and keepe place together, then the hundred psalmes to the tune of greene-sleeues : what tempest (I troa) threw this whale, (with so many tuns of oyle in his belly) a'shoare at *Windsor* ? How shall I be reuenged on him ? I thinke the best way were, to entertaine him with hope, till the wicked fire of lust haue melted him in his owne grease. Did you euer heare the like ?

Mis. Page

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Mis. Page. Letter for letter ; but that the name of *Page* and *Ford* differs ; to thy great comfort in this mystery of ill opinions, heer's the twyn-brother of thy letter ; but let thine inherit first, for I protest mine neuer shall : I warrant hee hath a thousand of these letters, writ with blancke space for different names (sure more) and these are of the second edition ; he wil print them out of doubt, for he cares not what he puts into the presse, when he would put vs two ; I had rather be a giantesse and lye vnder mount *Pelion*. Well ; I will find you twentie lasciuious turtles ere one chaste man.

Mis. Ford. Why this is the very fame ; the very hand, the very words, what doth he thinke of vs ?

Mis. Page. Nay I know not ; it makes me almost ready to wrangle with mine owne honesty ; Ile entertaine my selfe like one that I am not acquainted withall, for sure vnlesse hee know some straine in mee, that I know not my selfe, hee would neuer haue boorded me in this furie.

Mis. Ford. Boording call you it ? Ile be sure to keepe him aboue decke.

Mis. Page. So will I, if he come vnder my hatches, Ile neuer to sea againe. Let's be reueng'd on him ; let's appoint him a meeting, giue him a show of comfort in his suite, and lead him on with a fine baited delay, till hee hath pawn'd his horses to mine host of the garter.

Mis. Ford. Nay, I will consent to act any villainy against him, that may not fully the charinesse of our honesty ; oh that my husband saw this letter ; it would giue eternall food to his iealousie.

Mis. Page. Why looke where he comes ; and my good man too ; hee's as farre from iealousie, as I am from giuing him cause, and that (I hope) is an vnmeasurable distance.

Mis. Ford. You are the happier woman.

Mis. Page. Let's consult together against this greasie knight ; come hither.

Ford.

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Ford. Well, I hope, it be not so.

Pist. Hope is a curtall-dog in some affaires;

Sir John affects thy wife.

Ford. Why sir, my wife is not young.

Pist. He wooes both high and low, both rich and poore, both young and old, one with another (*Ford*) he loues the gally-mawfry (*Ford*) perpend.

Ford. Loue my wife?

Pistoll. With liuer, burning hot: preuent:
Or goe thou like sir *Acteon* he, with
Ring-wood at thy heels: O, odious is the name.

Ford. What name sir?

Pistol. The horne I say: farewell.
Take heed, haue open eye, for theeues doe foot by night.
Take heed, ere sommer comes, or cuckoo-birds doe sing.
Away sir corporall *Nim*.

Beleeue it (*Page*) he speakes fence.

Ford. I will be patient; I will finde out this.

Nim. And this is true; I like not the humor of lying, hee haue wronged mee in some humors; I should haue borne the humour'd letter to her, but I haue a sword, and it shall bite vpon my necessitie, he loues your wife; there's the short and the long: my name is corporall *Nim*, I speak, and I auouch; 'tis true: my name is *Nim*, and *Falstoffe* loues your wife, adieu, I loue not the humour of bread and cheefe: adieu.

Page. The humour of it (quoth'a?) heere's a fellow frights *English* out of his wits.

Ford. I will seeke out *Falstaffe*.

Page. I neuer heard such a drawling affecting rogue.

Ford. If I doe finde it: well.

Page. I will not beleeue such a *Cataian*, though the priest o'th' towne commended him for a true man.

Ford. 'Twas a good sensible fellow, well.

Page. How now *Meg*?

Mis. Page.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Mis. Page. Whither goe you (*George?*) harke you.

Mis. Ford. How now (*sweet Frank*) why art thou melancholy?

Ford. I melancholy? I am not melancholy:
Get you home, goe.

Mis. Ford. Faith, thou hast some crotchets in thy head,
Now, will you goe, mistress *Page*?

Mis. Page. Haue with you, you'l come to dinner *George*?
Looke who comes yonder; shee shall bee our messenger to
this paltrie knight.

Mis. Ford. Trust me, I thought on her; shee'le fit it:

M. Page. You are come to see my daughter *Anne*?

Qui. I forsooth: and I pray how do's good mistresse *Anne*?

Mis. Page. Go in with vs and see, wee haue an houres talke
with you.

Page. How now master *Ford*?

Ford. You heard what this knaue told me, did you not?

Page. Yes, and you heard what the other told me?

Ford. Doe you thinke there is truth in them?

Page. Hang 'em slaues: I doe not thinke the knight would
offer it: but these that accuse him in his intent towards our
wiues, are a yoake of his discarded men, very rogues, now
they be out of seruice.

Ford. Were they his men?

Page. Marry were they.

Ford. I like it neuer the better for that,
Do's he lye at the garter?

Page. I marry do's he: if he should intend this voyage
toward my wife, I would turne her loose to him, and what
hee gets more of her, then sharpe words, let it lye on my head.

Ford. I doe not misdoubt my wife, but I would be loath to
turne them together, a man may bee too confident, I would
haue nothing lye on my head, I cannot be thus satisfied.

Page.

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Page. Looke where my ranting-hoft of the garter comes : there is either liquor in his pate, or mony in his purfe, when hee lookes fo merrily : How now mine hof?

Hof. How now bully-rooke, thou'rt a gentleman, caueleiro iuftice, I fay.

Shal. I follow, (mine hof) I follow, good-euen, and twenty (good mafter *Page*) mafter *Page*, will you go with vs ? we haue fport in hand.

Hof. Tell him caueleiro-juftice ; tell him bully-rooke.

Shal. Sir, there is a fray to be fought, betweene fir *Huge* the *Welch* prieft, and *Caius* the *French* doctör.

Ford. Good mine hof o'th'garter, a word with you.

Hof. What faift thou, my bully-rooke ?

Shal. Will you goe with us to behold it ? My merry hof hath had the meafuring of their weapons, and (I thinke) appointed them contrary places : for (beleue me) I heare the parfon is no iefter : harke, I will tell you what our fport fhall be.

Hof. Haft thou no fuit againft my knight ? my gueft-caualeire ?

Ford. None, I proteft, but ile giue you a pottle of burn'd facke, to giue me recourfe to him, and tell him my name is *Broome*, onely for a ief.

Hof. My hand, (bully,) thou fhalt haue egreffe and regrefse, (faid I well ?) and thy name fhall be *Broome*. It is a merry knight, will you goe an-heires ?

Shal. Haue with you mine hof.

Page. I haue heard the *French-man* hath good skill in his rapier.

Shal. Tut fir, I could haue told you more : in thefe times you ftand on diftance, your paffes, ftoccado's, and I know not what : 'tis the heart (mafter *Page*,) 'tis heere, 'tis heere, I haue feene the time, with my long-fword, I would haue made you fowre tall fellowes fkippe like rattes.

Hof.

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Hof. Heere boyes, heere, heere, shall we wag?

Page. Haue with you, I had rather heare them scold, then fight.

Ford. Though *Page* be a secure foole, and stands so firmly on his wiues frailty: yet, I cannot put-off my opinion so easily, she was in his company at *Pages* house, and what they made there, I know not. Well, I will looke further into't, and I haue a disguise, to sound *Falstaffe*, if I finde her honest, I loose not my labour, if shee be otherwise, 'tis labour well bestowed.

Exeunt.

Scœna Secunda.

Enter Falstaffe, Pistoll, Robin, Quickly, Bardolffe, Ford.

Fal. I will not lend thee a penny.

Pist. Why then the world's mine oyster, which I, with sword will open.

Fal. Not a penny, I haue beene content (sir) you should lay my countenance to pawne; I haue grated vpon my good friends for three reпрееues for you, and your coach-fellow *Nim*, or else you had look'd through the grate, like a geminy of baboones: I am damn'd in hell, for swearing to gentlemen my friends, you were good souldiers, and tall-fellowes. And when mistresse *Briget* lost the handle of her fan, I took't vpon mine honour thou hadst it not.

Pist. Didst not thou share; hadst thou not fifteene pence?

Fal. Reason, you roague, reason; thinkst thou Ile endanger my soule, gratis? at a word, hang no more about mee, I am no gibbet for you: goe, a short knife, and a throng, to your mannor of *Pickt-hatch*; goe, you'll not beare a letter for mee you roague? you stand vpon your honour: why, (thou vnconfinable basenesse) it is as much as I can doe to keepe the termes of my honour precise; I, I, I my selfe sometimes, leauing the feare of heauen on the left hand, and hiding mine

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honor in my necessity, am faine to shuffle: to hedge, and to lurch, and yet, you rogue, will en-sconce your raggs; you cat-a-mountaine-lookes, your red-lattice phrases, and your bold beating oathes, vnder the shelter of your honor? you will not doe it? you?

Pist. I doe relent: what would thou more of man?

Robin. Sir, here's a woman would speake with you.

Fal. Let her approach.

Qui. Giue your worship good morrow.

Fal. Good-morrow, good-wife.

Qui. Not so, and't please your worship.

Fal. Good, maid then.

Qui. Ile be sworne.

As my mother was the first houre I was borne.

Fal. I doe beleue the swearer; what with me?

Qui. Shall I vouch-safe your worship a word, or two?

Fal. Two thousand (faire woman) and ile vouchsafe thee the hearing.

Qui. There is one mistresse *Ford*, (sir) I pray come a little neerer this waies; I my selfe dwell with master doctor *Caius*.

Fal. Well, on; mistris *Ford*, you say.

Qui. Your worship saies very true; I pray your worship come a little neerer this waies.

Fal. I warrant thee no-bodie heares; mine owne people, mine owne people.

Qui. Are they so? Heauen-bleffe them, and make them his seruants.

Fal. Well; mistresse *Ford*, what of her?

Qui. Why, sir; shee's a good creature; lord, lord your worship's a wanton: well, heauen forgiue you, and all of vs, I pray——

Fal. Mistresse *Ford*, come, mistresse *Ford*.

Qui. Marry this is the short and the long of it; you haue brought her into such a canaries, as 'tis wonderfull; the best courtier

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courtier of them all (when the court lay at *Windsor*) could neuer haue brought her to such a canarie: yet there has beene knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches; I warrant you coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift, smelling so sweetly; all muske, and so rushling, I warrant you, in silke and golde, and in such alligant tearmes, and in such wine and fuger of the best, and the fairest, that would haue wonne any womans heart: and I warrant you, they could neuer get an eye-winke of her: I had my selfe twentie angels giuen me this morning, but I defie all angels in any such sort, as they say) but in the way of honesty: and I warrant you, they could neuer get her so much as sippe on a cup with the prowdest of them all, and yet there has beene earles; nay (which is more) pensioners, but I warrant you all is one with her.

Fal. But what saies shee to mee? bee briefe my good shee *Mercurie*.

Qui. Marry, she hath receiu'd your letter; for the which she thanks you a thousand times; and shee giues you to notifye, that her husband will be absence from his house, betweene ten and eleuen.

Fal. Ten, and eleuen.

Qui. I, forsooth; and then you may come and see the picture (she sayes) that you wot of; master *Ford* her husband will be from home: alas, the sweet woman leads an ill life with him; hee's a very iealousie-man; shee leades a v're frame-pold life with him, (good heart.)

Fal. Ten, and eleuen.

Woman, commend me to her, I will not faile her.

Qui. Why, you say well: But I haue another messenger to your worship: mistresse *Page* hath her heartie commendations to you to; and let me tell you in your eare, shee's as fartuous a ciuill modest wife, and one (I tell you) that will not misse you morning nor euening prayer, as any is in *Wind-*

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for, who ere be the other : and shee bade mee tell your worship, that her husband is feldome from home, but she hopes there will come a time. I neuer knew a woman so doate vpon a man ; surely I thinke you haue charmes, la : yes in truth.

Fal. Not I, I assure thee ; setting the attraction of my good parts aside, I haue no other charmes.

Qui. Blessing on your heart for't :

Fal. But I pray thee tell me this ; has *Fords* wife, and *Pages* wife acquainted each other, how they loue me ?

Qui. That were a iest indeed : they haue not so little grace I hope, that were a tricke indeed : but mistress *Page* would desire you to send her your little page of all loues ; her husband has a maruelous infection to the little page ; and truly master *Page* is an honest man ; neuer a wife in *Windsor* leades a better life than she do's ; do what shee will, say what she will, take all, pay all, goe to bed when shee list, rise when she list, all is as she will ; and truly she deserues it ; for if there be a kinde woman in *Windsor*, shee is one ; you must send her your page, no remedie.

Fal. Why, I will.

Qui. Nay, but doe so then, and looke you, hee may come and goe betweene you both ; and in any case haue a nay-word, that you may know one anothers minde, and the boy neuer heede to vnderstand any thing ; for 'tis not good that children should know any wickednes ; old folkes you know haue discretion, as they say, and know the world.

Fal. Farethee-well, commend mee to them both, there's my purse, I am yet thy debter ; boy, goe along with this woman, this newes distracts me.

Pist. This puncke is one of *Cupids* carriers,
Clap no more failes pursue vp with your fights :
Giue fire ; she is my prize, or oceanwhelme all.

Fal.

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Fal. Saist thou so (old *Iacke*) goe thy waies I make more of thy old body then I haue done: will they yet looke after thee? wilt thou after the expence of so much money, be now a gainer? good body, I thanke thee; let them say 'tis grossely done, so it be fairely done, no matter.

Bar. Sir *Iohn*, there's one master *Broome* below would faine speake with you, and be-acquainted with you; and hath sent your worship a mornings draught of sacke.

Fal. *Broome* is his name?

Bar. I sir.

Fal. Call him in: such *Broomes* are welcome to me, that ore'flowes such liquor; ah ha, mistresse *Ford* and mistresse *Page*, haue I encompass'd you? goe to, via.

Ford. 'Blesse you sir.

Fal. And you sir; would you speake with me?

Ford. I make bold to presse, with so little preparation vpon you.

Fal. You'r welcome, what's your will? giue vs leaue drawer.

Ford. Sir, I am a gentleman that haue spent much, my name is *Broome*.

Fal. Good master *Broome*, I desire more acquaintance of you.

Ford. Good sir *Iohn*, I sue for yours; not to charge you, for I must let you vnderstand, I thinke my selfe in better plight for a lender, then you are; the which hath something emboldned mee to this vnseason'd intrusion: for they say, if money goe before, all waies doe lye open.

Fal. Money is a good souldier (sir) and will on.

Ford. Troth, and I haue a bag of money heere troubles me; if you will helpe to beare it (sir *Iohn*) take all, or halfe for easing me of the carriage:

Fal. Sir, I know not how I may deserue to bee your porter.

Ford. I will tell you sir, if you will giue mee the hearing.

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Fal. Speake (good master *Broome*) I shall be glad to be your seruant.

Ford. Sir, I heare you are a scholler; (I will be brieft with you) and you haue beene a man long knowne to me, though I had neuer so good meanes as desire, to make my selfe acquainted with you. I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own imperfection: but (good sir *Iohn*) as you haue one eye vpon my follies, as you heare them vnfolded, turne another into the register of your owne, that I may passe with a reproofe the easier, sith you your selfe know how easie it is to be such an offender.

Fal. Very well sir, proceed:

Ford. There is a gentlewoman in this towne, her husbands name is *Ford*.

Fal. Well sir.

For. I haue long lou'd her, and I protest to you, bestowed much on her; followed her with a doating obseruance; ingross'd opportunities to meete her, free'd euery slight occasion that could but nigardly giue mee sight of her, not onely brought many presents to giue her, but haue giuen largely to many, to know what she would haue giuen briefly, I haue pursued her, as loue hath pursued mee, which hath beene on the wing of all occasions; but whatsoever I haue merited, either in my minde, or in my meanes, meede I am sure I haue receiued none, vnlesse experience be a iewell, that I haue purchased at an infinite rate, and that hath taught me to say this.

" Loue like a shadow flies, when substance loue pursues,

" Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.

Fal. Haue you receiu'd no promise of satisfaction at her hands?

Ford. Neuer.

Fal. Haue you importun'd her to such a purpose?

Ford.

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Ford. Neuer.

Fal. Of what qualitie was your loue then ?

Ford. Like a faire house, built on another mans ground, so that I haue lost my edifice, by mistaking the place where I erected it.

Fal. To what purpose haue you vnfolded this to me.

Ford. When I haue told you that, I haue told you all : Some say, that though shee appeare honest to me, yet in other places shee enlargeth hir mirth so farre, that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now (*sir Iohn*) here is the heart of my purpose : you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance, authenticke in your place and person, generally allow'd for your many war-like, court-like, and learned preparations.

Fal. O Sir.

Ford. Beleeue it, for you know it : there is money, spend it, spend it, spend more ; spend all I haue, onely giue me so much of your time in exchange of it, as to lay an amiable siege to the honesty of this *Fords* wife : vse your art of wooing ; win her to consent to you ; if any man may, you may as soone as any.

Fal. Would it apply well to the vehemency of your affection that I should win what you would enioy ? methinkes you prescribe to your selfe very preposterously.

Ford. O, vnderstand my drift ; she dwells so securely on the excellency of her honor, that the folly of my foule dares not present it selfe ; she is too bright to be look'd against. Now, could I come to her with any detection in my hand ; my desires had instance and argument to commend themselues, I could driue her then from the ward of her purity, her reputation, her marriage-vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too-too strongly embattaild against me ; what say you too't, *sir Iohn*.

Fal. Master *Broome*, I will first make bold with your mony, next, giue me your hand ; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enioy *Fords* wife.

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Ford. O good fir.

Fal. I say you shall.

Ford. Want no money (fir *John*) you shall want none.

Fal. Want no mistresse *Ford*, (master *Broome*) you shall want none ; I shall be with her (I may tell you) by her own appointment, euen as you came in to me, her assistant, or go-betweene, parted from me ; I say I shall be with her betweene ten and eleuen, for at that time the iealous-rascally-knaue her husband will be forth ; come you to me at night, you shall know how I speed.

Ford. I am blest in your acquaintance ; do you know *Ford* fir ?

Fal. Hang him (poore cuckoldy knaue) I know him not : yet I wrong him to call him poore ; they say the iealous wittolly-knaue hath masses of money, for the which his wife seemes to me well fauourd : I will vse her as the key of the cuckoldly-rogues coffer, and ther's my haruest-home.

Ford. I would you knew *Ford*, fir, that you might auoid him, if you saw him.

Fal. Hang him, mechanicall-salt-butter rogue ; I will stare him out of his wits ; I will awe-him with my cudgell : it shall hang like a meteor ore the cuckolds horns : master *Broome*, thou shalt know, I will predominate ouer the pezant, and thou shalt lye with his wife. Come to me soone at night : *Ford's* a knaue, and I will aggrauate his stile : thou (master *Broome*) shalt know him for knaue, and cuckold. Come to me soone at night.

Ford. What a damn'd *Epicurian*-rascall is this ? my heart is ready to cracke with impatience : who saies this is improuident iealousie ? my wife hath sent to him, the howre is fixt, the match is made ; would any man haue thought this ? see the hell of hauing a faire woman : my bed shall be abus'd, my coffers ran sack'd, my reputation gnawne at, and I shall not onely receiue this villanous wrong, but stand vnder the adoption

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tion of abhominable termes, and by him that does me this wrong : Termes, names : *Amaimon* sounds well ; *Lucifer*, well ; *Barbafon*, wel ; yet they are diuels additions ; the names of fiends : But cuckold, wittoll, cuckold ? the diuell himselfe hath not such a name. *Page* is an asse, a secure asse ; hee will trust his wife, hee will not be iealous ; I will rather trust a *Fleming* with my butter, perfon *Hugh* the *Welchman* with my cheefe, an *Irish-man* with my aqua-vitæ-bottle, or a theefe to walke my ambling gelding, then my wife with her selfe. Then she plots, then shee ruminates, then shee deuises ; and what they thinke in their hearts they may effect ; they will breake their hearts but they will effect. Heauen bee prais'd for my iealousie : eleuen o'clocke the howre, I will preuent this, detect my wife, bee reueng'd on *Falstaffe*, and laugh at *Page*. I will about it, beter three houres too soone, then a mynute too late : fie, fie, fie : cuckold, cuckold, cuckold.

Exit.

Scena Tertia.

Enter Caius, Rugby, Page, Shallow, Slender, Host.

Caius. Iacke Rngby.

Ru. Sir.

Caius. Vat is the clocke, Iack.

Rug. 'Tis past the howre (sir) that sir Hugh promis'd to meet.

*Caius. By Gar, he has faue his soule, dat he is no-come : hee has pray his Pible well, dat hee is no-come, by Gar (*Iack Rugby*) he is dead already, if he be come.*

Rug. Hee is wife sir ; hee knew your worship would kill him if he came.

*Caius. By Gar, de herring is no dead, so as I vill kill him, take your rapier, (*Iacke*) I vill tell you how I vill kill him.*

Rug. Alas sir, I cannot fence.

Cai. Villanie, take your rapier.

Rug.

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Rug. Forbeare, heer's company.

Host. 'Blesse thee, bully-doctor.

Shal. 'Saue you master doctor *Caius*.

Page. Now good master doctor.

Slen. 'Giue you good-morrow, fir.

Caius. Vat be all you one, two, tree, fowre, come for?

Host. To see thee fight, to see thee foigne, to see thee tra-uerse, to see thee heere, to see thee there, to see thee passe thy puncto, thy stocke, thy reuerse, thy distance, thy mon-tant: Is hee dead, my *Ethiopian*? Is he dead my *Francisco*? ha bully? what saies my *Esculapius*? my *Gallen*? my heart of elder? ha? is he dead bully-stale? is he dead?

Cai. By Gar, he is de coward-iack-priest of de world: he is not show his face.

Host. Thou art a *Castalion*-king vrinall; *Hector* of *Greece* (my boy)

Cai. I pray you beare witnesse, that mee haue stay, fixe or seuen, two tree howres for him, and hee is no come.

Shal. He is the wiser man (master doctor) he is a curer of foules, and you a curer of bodies; if you should fight, you goe against the haire of your professions: is it not true, master *Page*.

Page. Master *Shallow*; you haue your selfe beene a great fighter, though now a man of peace.

Shal. Body-kins M. *Page*, though I now be old, and of the peace; if I see a sword out, my finger itches to make one; though wee are iustices and doctors, and church-men (master *Page*) wee haue some salt of our youth in vs, we are the sons of women (master *Page*.)

Page. 'Tis true, master *Shallow*.

Shal. It will be found so, (M. *Page*.) M. doctor *Caius*, I am come to fetch you home, I am sworn of the peace, you haue show'd your selfe a wise physician, and fir *Hugh* hath showne

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showne himselfe a wife and patient churchman ; you must goe with me, Mr. doctor.

Host. Pardon guest-justice ; a monsieur mocke-water.

Cai. Mock-vater ? vat is dat ?

Host. Mock-water, in our *Englisb* tongue, is valour (bully.)

Cai. By Gar, then I haue as much mock-vater as de *Englisb*-man ; scuruy-fack-dog-priest : by Gar, mee vill his eares.

Host. He will clapper claw thee tightly (bully.)

Cai. Clapper de claw ? vat is dat ?

Host. That is, he will make thee amends.

Cai. By Gar, me doe looke he shall clapper-de-claw me, for by Gar me vill haue it.

Host. And I will prouoke him to't, or let him wag :

Cai. Me tanck you for dat.

Host. And moreouer, (bully,) but first, master ghuest, and M. Page, and eeke caualeiro *Slender*, goe you through the towne to *Frogmore*.

Page. Sir *Hugh* is there, is he ?

Host. He is there, see what humor hee is in ; and I will bring the doctor about by the fields ; will it doe well ?

Shal. Wee will doe it.

All. Adieu, good master doctor.

Cai. By Gar, me vill kill de priest, for he speake for a iack-an-ape to *Anne Page*.

Host. Let him die ; sheath thy impatience, throw cold water on thy choller ; goe about the fields with me through *Frogmore*, I will bring thee where mistris *Anne Page* is, at a Farm-house a feasting ; and thou shalt wooe her, cridegame, said I well ?

Cai. By Gar, me danck you vor dat ; by Gar I loue you, and I shall procure a you de good guest : de earle, de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my patients.

Host. For the which, I will be thy aduersary toward *Anne Page*, said I well ?

Cai.

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Gai. By Gar, 'tis good, vell said.

Host. Let vs wag then.

Gai. Come at my heeles, *Iack Rugby.*

Exeunt.

ACTUS TERTIUS.

Scœna Prima.

Enter Euans, Simple, Page, Shallow, Slender, Host, Caius, Rugby.

Euan. I pray you now, good master *Slenders* seruuingman and friend *Simple* by your name; which way haue you look'd for master *Caius*, that calls himselfe doctor of phisicke.

Simp. Marry sir, the pittie-ward, the parke-ward, every way, old *Windfor* way, and every way but the towne way.

Euan. I most feheemently desire you, you will looke that way.

Simp. I will sir.

Euan. 'Plesse my soule: how full of chollors I am and trempling of minde; I shall be glad if hee haue deceiued me: how melancholies I am? I will knog his Vrinalls about his knaues costard, when I haue good oportunities for the orke: 'plesse my soule. *To shallow riuers to whose falls; melodious birds sing madrigalls: There will we make our peds of roses: and a thousand fragrant posies. To shallow: 'mercie on mee, I haue a great dispositions to cry: melodious birds sing madrigalls:—When as I sat in Pabilon: and a thousand vagram posies. To shallow, &c.*

Sim. Yonder he is comming, this way sir *Hugh.*

Euan. Hee's welcome: *To shallow riuers, in whose fals: Heauen prosper the right: what weapons is he?*

Sim.

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Sim. No weapons, sir ; there comes my master, master *Shallow*, and another gentleman ; from *Frogmore*, ouer the stile, this way.

Euan. Pray you giue me my gowne, or else keepe it in your armes.

Shal. How now master parson ? good morrow good sir *Hugh*, keepe a gamester from the dice, and a good student from his booke, and it is wonderfull.

Slen. Ah sweet *Anne Page*.

Page. 'Saue you, good sir *Hugh*.

Euan. 'Pleasse you from his mercy-fake, all of you.

Shal. What ? the sword, and the word ?

Doe you study them both master parson ?

Page. And youthfull still, in your doublet and hose, this raw-rumaticke day ?

Euan. There is reasons, and causes for it ?

Page. Wee are come to you, to doe a good office, master parson.

Euan. Fery-well, what is it ?

Page. Yonder is a most reuerend gentleman ; who (be-like) hauing receiued wrong by some person, is at most odds with his owne grauity and patience, that euer you saw.

Shal. I haue liued foure-score yeeres, and vpward ; I neuer heard a man of his place, grauity, and learning, so wide of his owne respect.

Euan. What is he ?

Page. I thinke you know him ; master doctor *Caius* the renowned *French* physician.

Euan. Got's will, and his passion of my heart, I had as lief I would tell me of a messe of porredge.

Page. Why ?

Euan. Hee has no more knowledge in *Hibocrates* and *Galen*, and hee is a knaue besides : a cowardly knaue, as you would desires to acquainted withall.

Page.

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Page. I warrant you, hee's the man should fight with him.

Slen. O sweet *Anne Page*.

Shal. It appeares so by his weapons ; keepe them asunder, here comes doctor *Caius*.

Page. Nay good master parson, keepe your weapon.

Shal. So doe you, good master doctor.

Hofst. Disarme them, and let them question ; let them keepe their limbs whole, and hacke our *English*.

Cai. I pray you let-a-mee speake a word with your eare ; wherefore vill you not meet-a me ?

Euan. I pray you vse your patience in good time.

Caius. By Gar, you are de coward : de Iacke dog : Iohn ape.

Euan. Pray you let vs not be laughing-stocks to other mens humors ; I desire you in friendship, and I will one way or other make you amends : I will knog your vrinal about your knaues cogs-combe.

Cai. Diable ; *Iack Rugby* : mine host de iarteer ; haue I not stay for him, to kill him ? haue I not at de place I did appoint ?

Euan. As I am a christians soule, now looke you ; this is the place appointed, ile be iudgement by mine host of the Garter.

Hofst. Peace, I say, *Gallia* and *Gaule*, *French* and *Welch*, foule-curer, and body-curer.

Cai. I, dat is very good, excellant.

Hofst. Peace, I say ; heare mine host of the garter, Am I politicke ? Am I subtle ? Am I a *Machiuell* ? Shall I loose my doctor ? No, he giues me the potions and the motions. Shall I loose my parson ? my priest ? my fir *Hugh* ? No, hee giues me the prouerbes, and the no-verbs. Giue me thy hand (celestiall) so ; boyes of art, I haue deceiu'd you both ; I haue directed you to wrong places ; your hearts are mighty,
your

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your skinnés are whole, and let burn'd facke be the issue ; come, lay their swords to pawne ; follow me, lad of peace, follow, follow, follow.

Shal. Trust me, a mad host : follow gentlemen, follow.

Slen. O sweet *Anne Page*.

Cai. Ha' do I perceiue dat ? Haue you make-a-de-sot of vs, ha, ha ?

Euan. This is well, he hath made vs his vlowting-stog ; I desire you that we may be friends ; and let vs knog our praines together to be reuenge on this same scall scuruy-cogging-companion the host of the garter.

Cai. By Gar, with all my heart ; he promise to bring mee where is *Anne Page*, by Gar he deceiue mee too.

Euan. Well, I will smite his noddles ; pray you follow.

Scœna Secunda.

Mist. *Page*, *Robin*, *Ford*, *Page*, *Shallow*, *Slender*, *Host*, *Euan*s, *Caius*.

Mis. Page. Nay keepe your way, (little gallant) you were wont to be a follower ; but now you are a leader : whether had you rather lead mine eyes, or eye your masters heeles ?

Rob. I had rather (forsooth, goe before you like a man, then follow him like a dwarfe.

Mis. Page. O you are a flattering boy, now I see you'll be a courtier.

Ford. Well met mistress *Page*, whether go you.

Mis. Page. Truly sir, to see your wife, is she at home ?

Ford. I, and as idle as she may hang together for want of companie ; I thinke if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.

Mis. Page. Be sure of that, two other husbands.

Ford. Where had you this pretty weather-cocke ?

Mis. Pa. I cannot tell what (the dickens) his name is my huf-

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husband had him of, what do you cal your knights name
sirrah ?

Rob. Sir *Iohn Falstaffe*.

Ford. Sir *Iohn Falstaffe*.

M.P. He, he, I can neuer hit on's name ; there is such a
league between my good man, and he ; is your wife at home
indeed.

Ford. Indeed she is.

Mis. Page. By your leaue sir, I am sicke till I see her.

Ford. Has *Page* any braines ? Hath he any eies ? hath he
any thinking ? Sure they sleepe, hee hath no vse of them :
why this boy will carrie a letter twentie mile as easie, as a
canon will shoot point-blanke twelue score : hee peeces out
his wiues inclination, hee giues her folly motion and aduan-
tage : and now she's going to my wife, and *Falstaffes* boy
with her ; a man may heare this showre sing in the winde ;
and *Falstaffes* boy with her : good plots, they are laide, and
our reuolted wiues share damnation together. Well, I will
take him, then torture my wife, plucke the borrowed vaile of
modestie from the so seeming mistris *Page*, divulge *Page* him-
selfe for a secure and wilfull *Aetion*, and to these violent pro-
ceedings all my neighbors shall cry aime. The clocke giues
me my qu, and my assurance bids me searck, there I shall finde
Falstaffe : I shall be rather praids for this, then mock'd, for
it is as possitiue, as the earth is firme, that *Falstaffe* is there :
I will go.

Shal. Page, &c. Well met master *Ford*.

Ford. Trust me a good knotte ; I haue good cheere at home,
and I pray you all go with me.

Shal. I must excuse my selfe master *Ford*.

Slen. And so must I sir,

We haue appointed to dine with mistris *Anne*,
And I would not breake with her for more mony
Then ile speake of.

Shal.

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Shal. We haue linger'd about a match betweene *Anne Page*, and my cozen *Slender*, and this day wee shall haue our answer.

Slender. I hope I haue your good will father *Page*.

Page. You haue master *Slender*, I stand wholly for you, But my wife (master doctor) is for you altogether.

Caius. I be-gar, and de maid is loue-a me: my nursh-a Quickly tell me so much.

Host. What say you to young master *Fenton*? He capers, he dances, he has eies of youth: he writes verses, he speakes holliday, he smels *April* and *May*, he will carry't, hee will carry't, 'tis in his buttons, he will carry't.

Page. Not by my consent I promise you. The gentleman is of no hauing, he kept companie with the wilde prince, and *Pointz*: hee is of too high a region, hee knows too much: no, hee shall not knit a knot in his fortunes, with the finger of my substance, if he takes her, let him take her simply; the wealth I haue waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way.

Ford. I beseech you heartily, some of you goe home with me to dinner; besides your cheere you shall haue sport, I will shew you a monster; master doctor, you shall goe, so shall you master *Page*, and you sir *Hugh*.

Shal. Well, fare you well:

We shall haue the freer woing at master *Pages*.

Cai. Go home *John Rugby*, I come anon.

Host. Farwell my hearts, I will to my honest knight *Falstaffe*, and drinke canarie with him.

Ford. I thinke I shall drinke in pipe-wine first with him, Ile make him dance. Will you go, gentles?

All. Haue with you, to see this monster.

Exeunt.

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Scena Tertia.

Enter master Ford, master Page, Seruants, Robin, Falstaffe, Ford, Page, Caius, Euans.

Mis. Ford. What *Iohn*, what *Robert*.

M. Page. Quickly, quickly; is the buck-basket——

Mis. Ford. I warrant. What *Robin* I say.

Mis. Page. Come, come, come.

Mi. Ford. Heere, set it downe.

M. Page. Giue your men the charge, wee must be briefe, be ready here hard-by in the brew-house, and when I sodainly call you, come forth, and (without any pause, or staggering) take this basket on your shoulders; that done trudge with it in all hast, and carry it among the whitsters in *Dotchet* mead, and there empty it in the muddie ditch, close by the *Thames* side.

Mis. Page. You will do it?

M. Ford. I ha told them ouer and ouer, they lacke no direction.

Begone, and come when you are call'd.

M. Page. Here comes little *Robin*.

Mis. Ford. How now my eyas musket, what newes with you?

Rob. My M. sir *Iohn* is come in at the backe doore
Mis. Ford. and requests your company.

Mis. Page. You little iack-a-lent, haue you bin true to vs.

Rob. I, ile be sworne; my master knowes not of your being heere: and hath threatned to put mee into euerlasting liberty, if I tell you of it; for he sweares he'll turne me away.

Mis. Page. Thou'rt a good boy; this secrecy of thine shall be a tailor to thee, and shall make thee a new doublet and hose. Ile go hide me.

Mis. Ford. Do so, go tell thy master, I am alone; mistress *Page*, remember you your qu.

Mis. Page.

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Mis. Page. I warrant thee, if I do not act it, hisse me.

Mis. Ford. Go too then ; we'l vse this vnwholsome humidity, this grosse watry pumpion, we'll teach him to know turtles from iayes.

Fal. Haue I caught thee, my heavenly iewell ? Why now let me die, for I haue liu'd long enough ; this is the period of ambition ; O this blessed houre.

Mis. Ford. O sweet sir *John*.

Fal. *Mistris Ford*, I cannot cog, I cannot prate (*master Ford*) now shall I sinne in my wish ; I would thy husband were dead, ile speake it before the best lord, I would make thee my lady.

Mis. Ford. I your lady sir *John* ? Alas, I should be a pittifull lady.

Fal. Let the court of *France* shew mee such another ; I see how thine eye would emulate the diamond ; thou hast the right arched-beauty of the brow, that becomes the ship-tyre, the tyre-valiant, or any tire of *Venetian* admittance.

Mis. Ford. A plaine kerchiefe, sir *John*.

My browes become nothing else, nor that well neither.

Fal. Thou art a tyrant to say so : thou wouldst make an absolute courtier, and the firme fixture of thy foote, would giue an excellent motion to thy gate, in a semicircled farthingale. I see what thou wert if fortune thy foe, were not nature thy friend : come, thou canst not hide it.

Mis. Ford. Beleeue me, ther's no such thing in me.

Fal. What made me loue thee ? Let that perswade thee : ther's something extraordinary in thee. Come I cannot cog, and say thou art this and that, like a manie of thess lipping hauthorne buds, that come like women in mens apparell, and smell like *Bucklers-berry* in simple time : I cannot, but I loue thee, none but thee ; and thou deseru'st it.

M. Ford. Do not betray me sir, I feare you loue *M. Page*.

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Fal. Thou mightst as well say, I loue to walke by the counter-gate, which is as hatefull to me, as the reeke of a lime-kill.

Mis. Ford. Well, heauen knowes how I loue you, And you shall one day finde it.

Fal. Keepe in that minde, Ile deserue it.

Mis. Ford. Nay, I must tell you, so you doe ; Or else I could not be in that minde.

Rob. Mistris *Ford*, mistris *Ford*, heere's mistris *Page* at the doore, sweating, and blowing, and looking wildly, and would needs speake with you presently.

Fal. She shall not see me, I will enconce mee behinde the arras.

M. Ford. Pray you doe so, she's a very tatling woman. Whats the matter ? How now ?

Mis. Page. O mistris *Ford* what haue you done ? You'r sham'd, y'are ouerthrowne, y'are vndone for euer.

M. Ford. What's the matter, good mistris *Page* ?

M. Page. O weladay, mistris *Ford*, hauing and honest man to your husband, to giue him such cause of suspition.

M. Ford. What cause of suspition ?

Mis. Page. What cause of suspition ? Out vpon you : How am I mistooke in you ?

Mis. Ford. Why (alas) what's the matter ?

Mis. Page. Your husband's comming hether (woman) with all the officers in *Windsor*, to search for a gentleman, that hee sayes is heere now in the house, by your consent to take an ill aduantage of his absence, you are vndone.

M. Ford. 'Tis not so, I hope.

Mis. Page. Pray heauen it be not so, that you haue such a man heere : but 'tis most certaine your husband's comming, with halfe *Windsor* at his heeles, to serch for such a one, I come before to tell you, if you know yourselfe cleere, why I am glad of it, but if you haue a friend here, conuey, conuey him

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him out. Be not amaz'd, call all your senses to you, defend your reputation, or bid farwell to your good life for euer.

M. Ford. What shall I doe? There is a gentleman my deere friend, and I feare not mine owne shame so much, as his perill. I had rather then a thousand pound he were out of the house.

M. Page. For shame, neuer stand (you had rather, you had rather) your husband's heere at hand, be thinke you of some conveyance: in the house you cannot hide him. Oh, how haue you deceiu'd me? Looke, heere is a basket, if hee be of any reasonable stature, hee may creepe in heere, and throw fowle linnen vpon him, as if it were going to bucking; or it is whiting time, send him by your two men to *Datchet-Meade*.

M. Ford. He's too big to go in there, what shall I doe?

Fal. Let me see't, let me see't, O let me see't:
Ile in, ile in, follow your friends counsell, ile in.

Mist. Page. What sir *John Falstaffe*? Are these your letters, knight?

Fal. I loue thee, helpe mee away: let me creepe in heere: ile neuer——

M. Page. Helpe to couer your master (boy :) call your men (*mist. Ford.*) you dissembling knight.

Mist. Ford. What *John Rugby*, *John*; goe, take vp these cloathes heere, quickly: wher's the cowle-staffe? Looke how you drumble? Carry them to the landresse in *Datchet* meade: quickly, come.

Ford. 'Pray you come neere; if I suspect without cause, Why then make sport at me, then let me be your iest, I deserue it: how now? Whether beare you this?

Ser. To the landresse forsooth?

Mist. Ford. Why, what haue you to doe whether they beare it? You were best meddle with buck-washing.

Ford. Bucke? I would I could wash my selfe of the buck: Bucke, bucke, bucke, I bucke; I warrant you bucke,

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And of the season too, it shall appeare.

Gentlemen, I haue dream'd to night, Ile tell you my dreame, heere, heere, heere bee my keyes, ascend my chambers, search, seeke, finde out : Ile warrant wee'le vnkennell the fox. Let mee stop this way first : so, now vncape.

Page. Good master *Ford*, be contented :
You wrong your selfe too much.

Ford. True (master *Page*) vp gentlemen,
You shall see sport anon :
Follow me gentlemen.

Euans. This is fery fantastical humors and iealousies.

Caius. By Gar, 'tis no-the fashion of *France* :
It is not iealous in *France*.

Page. Nay follow him (gentlemen) see the yssue of his search.

Mis. Page. Is there not a double excellency in this?

Mis. Ford. I know not which pleases me better,
That my husband is deceiued, or sir *John*.

Mis. Page. What a taking was he in, when your husband askt who was in the basket?

Mis. Ford. I am halfe affraid hee will haue neede of washing, so throwing him into the water, will doe him a benefit.

Mis. Page. Hang him dishonest rascall : I would all of the same straine, were in the same distresse.

Mis. Ford. I thinke my husband hath some speciall suspition of *Falstafs* being heere : for I neuer saw him so grosse in his iealousie till now.

Mis. Page. I will lay a plot to try that, and wee will yet haue more trickes with *Falstaffe* ; his dissolute disease will scarce obey this medicine.

Mis. Ford. Shall we fend that foolishion carion, mistress *Quickly* to him, and excuse his throwing into the water, and giue him another hope, to betray him to another punishment?

Mis. Page.

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Mis. Page. Wee will doe it ; let him be sent for to morrow eight a clocke to haue amends.

Ford. I cannot finde him ; may be the knaue bragg'd of that he could not compasse.

Mis. Page. Heard you that ?

Mis. Ford. You use me well, *M. Ford* ? doe you ?

Ford. I, I doe so.

M. Ford. Heauen make you better than your thoughts.

Ford. Amen.

Mis. Page. You doe your selfe mighty wrong (*M. Ford*)

Ford. I, I ; I must beare it.

Euan. If there be any pody in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses ; heauen forgieue my sinnes at the day of iudgment.

Caius. Be Gar, nor I too : there is no bodies.

Page. Fy, fy, *M. Ford*, are you not asham'd ? What spirit, what diuell suggests this imagination ? I would not ha your distemper in this kind, for the welth of *Windsor* castle.

Ford. 'Tis my fault (*M. Page*) I suffer for it.

Euans. You suffer for a pad conscience ; your wife is as honest a o'mans, as I will desires among fiae thousand, and fiae hundred too.

Cai. By Gar, I see 'tis an honest woman.

Ford. Well I promis'd you a dinner, come, come, walke in the parke, I pray you pardon me : I will hereafter make knowne to you why I haue done this. Come wife, come *Mis. Page*, I pray you pardon me. Pray hartly pardon me.

Page. Let's go in gentlemen, but (trust me) we'l mocke him ; I doe inuite you to morrow morning to my house to breakefast : after we'll a birding together, I haue a fine hawke for the bush. Shall it be so ?

Ford. Any thing.

Euan. If there is one, I shall make two in the companie.

Cai. If there be one, or two, I shall make-a-theturd.

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Ford. Pray you goe, *M. Page.*

Euans. I pray you now remembrance to morrow on the lowlie knaue, mine host.

Cai. Dat is good by Gar, withall my heart.

Euan. A lowlie knaue, to haue his gibes, and his mockeries.

Exeunt.

Scœna Quarta.

Enter Fenton, Anne Page, Shallow, Slender, Quickly, Page, Mist. Page.

Fen. I see I cannot get thy fathers loue,
Therefore no more turne me to him (*sweet Nan.*)

Anne. Alas, how then?

Fen. Why thou must be thy selfe.
He doth obiekt, I am too great of birth,
And that my state being gall'd with my expence,
I seeke to heale it onely by his wealth.
Besides these, other barres he layes before me,
My riots past, my wilde societies,
And tels me 'tis a thing impossible
I should loue thee, but as a property.

Anne. May be he tels you true.

Fen. No, heauen so speed me in my time to come,
Albeit I will confesse, thy fathers wealth
Was the first moriue that I woo'd thee (*Anne :*)
Yet wooing thee, I found thee of more valew
Then stamps in gold, or summes in sealed bagges :
And 'tis the very riches of thy selfe,
That now I ayme at.

Anne. Gentle *M. Fenton.*

Yet seeke my fathers loue, still seeke it sir,
If opportunity and humblest suite
Cannot attaine it, why then harke you hither.

Shal.

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Shal. Breake their talke mistris *Quickly*,
My kinsman shall speake for himselfe.

Slen. Ile make a shaft or a bolt on't, slid, tis but venturing.

Shal. Be not dismaid.

Slen. No, she shall not dismay me :

I care not for that, but that I am affeared.

Qui. Hark ye, master *Slender* would speake a word with you.

Anne. I come to him. This is my fathers choice.

O what a world of vilde-ill-fauour'd faults

Lookes handsome in three hundred pounds a yeare ?

Qui. And how do's good master *Fenton* ?

Pray you a word with you.

Shal. Shee's comming ; to her coz :

O boy, thou hadst a father,

Slen. I had a father (mistris *Anne*) my vncke can tel you
good iests of him ; pray you vncke, tel mistris *Anne* the iest how
my father stole two geese out of a pen, good vnckle.

Shal. Mistris *Anne*, my cozen loues you.

Slen. I that I doe, as well as I loue any woman in *Glocestershire*.

Shal. He will maintaine you like a gentlewoman.

Slen. I that I will, come cut and long-taile, vnder the degree of a squire.

Shal. Hee will make you a handred and fiftie pounds ioynture.

Anne. Good master *Shallow* let him woe for himselfe.

Shal. Marry I thanke you for it, I thanke you for that good comfort : she cals you (coz) ile leaue you.

Anne. Now master *Slender*.

Slen. Now good mistris *Anne*.

Anne. What is your will ?

Slen. My will ? odds-hart-lings, that's a prettie iest indeed :
I ne're made my will yet (I thanke heauen :) I am not such a
sickely creature, I giue heauen praise.

Anne.

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Anne. I meane (*M. Slender*) what would you with me?

Slen. Truly, for mine owne part, I would little or nothing with you: your father and vncke hath made motions if it be my lucke, so; if not, happy man be his dole, they can tell you how things goe, better then I can: you may, your father, heere he comes.

Page. Now master *Slender*; loue him daughter *Anne*.
Why how now? what does master *Fenton* here?
You wrong me sir, thus still to haunt my house.
I told you sir, my daughter is disposd of.

Fen. Nay master *Page*, be not impatient.

Mist. Page. Good master *Fenton*, come not to my child.

Page. She is no match for you.

Fen. Sir, will you heare me?

Page. No, good master *Fenton*.

Come *M. Shallow*: come sonne *Slender*, in;
Knowing my minde, you wrong me (*M. Fenton*.)

Qui. Speake to mistris *Page*.

Fen. Good mistris *Page*, for that I loue your daughter
In such a righteous fashion as I do,
Perforce, against all checkes, rebukes, and manners,
I must aduance the colours or my loue,
And not retire. Let me haue your good will.

Anne. Good mother, do not marry me to yond foole:

Mist. Page. I meane it not, I seek you a better husband.

Qu. That's my master, master doctor.

Anne. Alas I had rather be set quick i'th earth,
And bowl'd to death with turnips.

Mist. Page. Come, trouble not your selfe good master
Fenton, I will not be your friend, nor enemy:
My daughter will I question how she loues you,
And as I finde her, so am I affected;
Till then farewell sir, she must needs go in,
Her father will be angry.

Fen. Farewell gentle mistris; farewell *Nan*.

Qu.

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Qu. This is my doing now ; nay, faide I, will you cast away your childe on a foole, and a phyfician :

Looke on mafter *Fenton*, this is my doing.

Fen. I thanke thee : and I pray thee once to night, Giue my sweet *Nan* this ring : there's for thy paines.

Qu. Now heauen fend thee good fortune, a kinde heart he hath ; a woman would run through fire and water for fuch a kinde heart. But yet, I would my mafter had miftris *Anne*, or I would mafter *Slender* had her : or (in footh) I would mafter *Fenton* had her ; I will doe what I can for them all three, for fo I haue promifed, and Ile be as good as my word ; but fpeciously for mafter *Fenton*. Well, I muft of another errand to fir *Iohn Falftaffe* from my two miftreffes : what a beaft am I to flacke it.

Exeunt.

Scœna Quarta.

Enter Falftaffe, Bardolfe, Quickly, Ford.

Fal. *Bardolfe* I fay.

Bar. Heere fir.

Fal. Go, fetch me a quart of facke, put a toft in't.

Haue I liu'd to be carried in a basket like a barrow of butchers offall ? and to be throwne into the *Thames* ? wel, if I be feru'd fuch another tricke, Ile haue my braines 'tane out and butter'd, and giuen them to a dogge for a new-yeares gift. The rogues flighted mee into the riuer with as little remorse, as they would haue drown'de a blinde bitches puppies, fifteene i'th litter : and you may know by my fize, that I haue a kinde of alacrity in finking : if the bottome were as deepe as hell I fould downe. I had beene drown'd, but that the fhore was fheluy and fhallow ; a death that I abhorre : for the water fwelles a man ; and what a thing fould I haue beene, when I had been fwel'd ? I fould haue beene a mountaine of mummie.

Bar.

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Bar. Here's M. *Quickly* sir to speake with you.

Fal. Come, let me poure in some sacke to the *Thames* water : for my bellies as cold as if I had swallow'd snow-bals, for pilles to coole the reines. Call her in.

Bar. Come in woman.

Qui. By your leaue ; I cry you mercy ?
Giue your worship good morrow.

Fal. Take away these challices ;
Go, brew me a pottle of sacke finely.

Bar. With egges, sir ?

Fal. Simple of it selfe ; Ile no pullet-sperme in my brewage. How now ?

Qui. Marry sir, I come to your worship from M. *Ford*.

Fal. Mis. *Ford* ? I have had ford enough ; I was thrown into the ford ; I haue my belly full of ford.

Qui. Alas the day, (good-heart) that was not her fault ; she do's so take on with her men ; they mistooke their erection.

Fal. So did I mine, to build vpon a foolish womans promise.

Qui. Well, she laments sir for it, that it would yern your heart to see it ; her husband goes this morning a birding ; she desires you once more to come to her, betweene eight and nine ; I must carry her word quickly, she'll make you amends I warrant you.

Fal. Well, I will visit her, tell her so ; and bidde her thinke what a man is ; let her consider his frailty, and then iudge of my merit.

Qui. I will tell her.

Fal. Do so. Betweene nine and ten saist thou ?

Qui. Eight and nine sir.

Fal. Well, be gone ; I will not misse her.

Qu. Peace be with you sir.

Fal. I meruaile I heare not of master *Broome* ; he sent me
word

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word to stay within ; I like his money well :

Oh, heere he comes.

Ford. Blesse you sir.

Fal. Now *M. Broome*, you come to know
What hath past betweene me, and *Fords* wife.

Ford. That indeed (*sir John*) is my businesse.

Fal. *M. Broome* I will not lye to you,
I was at her house the houre she appointed me.

Ford. And sped you sir ?

Fal. Very ill-fauouredly *M. Broome*.

Ford. How so sir, did she change her determination ?

Fal. No (*M. Broome*) but the peaking curnuto her husband
(*M. Broome*) dwelling in a continuall larum of ielousie, comes
me in the instant of our encounter, after wee had embrast, kist,
protested, and (as it were) spoke the prologue of our comedy :
and at his heeles, a rabble of his companions, thither pro-
uoked and instigated by his distemper, and (forsooth) to searh
his house for his wiues loue.

Ford. What ? while you were there ?

Fal. While I was there.

Ford. And did he searh for you, and could not find you ?

Fal. You shall heare. As good lucke would haue it, comes
in one mist. *Page*, giues intelligence of *Fords* approach : and
in her inuention, and *Fords* wiues distraction, they conuey'd
me into a bucke-basket,

Ford. A buck-basket ?

Fal. Yes, a buck-basket : ram'd mee in with foule shirts,
and smockes, socks, foule stockings, greasie napktns, that
(*master Broome*) there was the rankest compound of villanous
smell, that euer offended nostrill.

For. And how long lay you there ?

Fal. Nay, you shall heare (*master Broome*) what I haue suf-
fered, to bring this woman to euill, for your good : being thus
cram'd in the basket, a couple of *Fords* knaues, his hindes,
were

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were cald forth by their mistress, to carry me in the name of foule cloathes to *Datchet Lane*; they tooke mee on their shoulders met the iealous knaue their master in the doore; who asked them once or twice what they had in their basket? I quak'd for feare lest the lunatique knaue would haue search'd it: but fate (ordaining hee should be a cuckold) held his hand: well, on went hee, for a search and away went I for foule cloathes; but marke the sequell (master *Broome*) I suffered the pangs of three feuerall deaths: first, an intollerable fright, to bee detected with a iealous rotten bell-weather: next to bee compass'd like a good bilbo in the circumference of a pecke, hilt to point, heele to head. And then to bee stopt in like a strong distillation with stinking cloathes, that fretted in their own grease thinke of that, a man of my kidney; thinke of that, that am as subiect to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution, and thaw: it was a miracle to scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more that halfe stew'd in grease (like a *Dutch-dish*) to be throwne into the *Thames*, and cool'd, glowing hot, in that serge like a horse-shoo; thinke of that; hissing hot: thinke of that (master *Broome*.)

Ford. In good sadnesse sir, I am forry, that for my sake you haue sufferd all this.

My suite then is desperate: you'll vndertake her no more?

Fal. Master *Broome*: I will be throwne into *Etta*, as I haue beene into *Thames*, ere I will leaue her thus; her husband is this morning gone a birding, I haue receiued from her another ambassie of meeting; 'twixt eight and nine is the houre (master *Broome*.)

Ford. 'Tis past eight already sir.

Fal. Is it? I will then addresse mee to my appointment; come to me at your conuenient leasure, and you shall know how I speede: and the conlusion shall be crowned with your
enjoying

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enjoying her: adieu; you shall haue her (master *Broome*) master *Broome*, you shall cuckold *Ford*.

Ford. Hum: ha? Is this a vision? is this a dreame? doe I sleepe? master *Ford* awake, awake master *Ford*; ther's a hole made in your best coate (master *Ford*:) this 'tis to bee marryed; this 'tis to haue linnen, and buck-baskets: well, I will proclaime my selfe what I am; I will now take the leacher; hee is at my house; hee cannot scape mee, 'tis impossible hee should: he cannot creepe into a halfe-penny purse, not into a pepper-boxe. But lest the diuell that guides him, should aide him, I will search impossible places: though what I am, I cannot auoide; yet to be what I would not, shall not make me tame; if I haue hornes, to make one mad, let the proverbe goe with me, Ile be horne-mad. *Exeunt.*

ACTUS QUARTUS.

Scœna Prima.

Enter mistress Page, Quickly, William, Euens.

Mis. Page. Is he at M. *Fords* already think'st thou?

Qui. Sure hee is by this, or will bee presently; but truly he is very couragious mad, about his throwing into the water. *Mistress Ford* desires you to come sodainely.

Mis. Page. Ile be with her by and by; Ile but bring my yong-man here to schoole; looke where his master comes; 'tis a playing day I see: how now sir *Hugh*, no schoole to day?

Euans. No, master *Slender* is let the boyes leaue to play.

Qui. 'Blessing of his heart.

Mis. Page. Sir *Hugh*, my husband saies my sonne profits nothing in the world at his booke; I pray you aske him some questions in his accidence.

Euans.

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Euans. Come hither *William* ; hold vp your head ; come.

Mis. Page. Come-on sirha ; hold vp your head ; answere your master, be not afraid.

Euans. *William*, how many numbers is in nownes ?

Will. Two

Qui. Truely, I thought there had bin one number more, because they fay od's-nownes.

Euan. Peace, your tattlings. What is (*faire*) *William* ?

Will. *Pulcher.*

Qu. Powlcats ? there are fairer things then powlcat, sure.

Euan. You are very simplicity o'man ; I pray you peace. What is (*lapis*) *William* ?

Will. A stone.

Euan. And what is a stone (*William* ?)

Will. A peeble.

Euan. No ; it is *lapis* ; I pray you remember in your praine.

Will. *Lapis.*

Euan. That is a good *William* ; what is he (*William*) that do's lend articles :

Will. Articles are borrowed of the pronounes ; and be thus declined : *singulariter nominatiuo hic hæc, hoc.*

Euan. *Nominatiuo hig, hæg, hog* ; pray you marke ; *genetiue huius* ; well : what is your *accusatiue case* ?

Will. *Accusatiuo hinc.*

Euan. I pray you haue your remembrance (*childe*) *accusatiuo hing, hang, hog.*

Qui. Hang-hog, is *Latten* for bacon, I warrant you.

Euan. Leaue your prables (o'man) what is the *focatiue case* (*William* ?)

Will. *O, vocatiuo, O.*

Euan. Remember *William*, *focatiue*, is *caret*,

Qui. And that's a good roote.

Euan. O'man, forbare.

Mis. Page

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Mis. Page. Peace.

Evan. What is your genitiue case plurall (*William?*)

Will. Genitiue case?

Euan. I.

Will. Genitiue horum, harum, horum.

Qui. Vengeance of Ginyes case; fie on her; neuer name her (childe) if she be a whore.

Euan. For shame o'man.

Qui. You doe ill to teach the childe such words: hee teaches him to hic, and to hac; which they'll doe fast enough of themfelues, and to call horum; fie vpon you.

Euan. O'man, art thou lunaties? hast thou no vnderstandings for thy cases, and the numbers of the genders? thou art as foolish christian creatures, as I would desires.

M. Page. Pre'thee hold thy peace.

Euan. Shew me now (*William*) some declensions of your Pronounes.

Will. Forsooth, I haue forgot.

Euans. It is *Qui, que, quod*; if you forget your *quies*, your *ques*, and your *quods*, you must be preeches: Goe your waies and play, go.

M. Page. He is a better scholler then I thought hee was.

Euan. He is a good sprag-memory: farewell *Mis. Page*.

Mis. Page. Adeu good sir *Hugh*.

Get you home boy, come we stay too long.

Exeunt.

Scœna Secunda.

Enter Falstaffe, M. Ford, Mis. Page, Seruants, Ford, Page, Caius, Euans, Shallow.

Fal. *Mis. Ford*, your sorrow hath eaten vp my sufferance; I see you are obsequious in your loue, and I professe requitall to haire bredth, not onely mistris *Ford*, in the simple office of

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loue, but in all the accustrement complement, and ceremony of it : but are you sure of your husband now ?

M. Ford. Hee's a birding (sweet sir *John*.)

Mis. Page. What hoa, gossip *Ford* ; what hoa.

Mis. Ford. Step into th' chamber, sir *John*.

Mis. Page. How now (sweet heart) whose at home, besides your selfe ?

Mis. Ford. Why none but mine owne people.

Mis. Page. Indeed ?

Mis. Ford. No certainly ; speake louder.

Mis. Page. Truly, I am so glad you haue no body here.

Mis. Ford. Why ?

Mis. Page. Why woman, your husband is in his olde lines againe ; he so takes on yonder with my husband, so railes against all married mankind ; so curses all *Eues* daughters, of what complexion soeuer ; and so buffettes himselfe on the forehead ; crying peere-out, peere-out, that any madnesse I euer yet beheld, seem'd but tamenesse, ciuility, and patience to this his distemper he is in now. I am glad the fat knight is not heere,

Mis. Ford. Why, do's he talke of him ?

Mis. Page. Of none but him, and sweares hee was caried out the last time hee search'd for him, in a basket ; protests to my husband he is now heere, and hath drawne him and the rest of their company from their sport, to make another experiment of his suspition : but I am glad the knight is not heere ; now he shall see his owne foolerie.

Mis. Ford. How neere is he mistris *Page* ?

Mist. Page. Hard by, at street end ; he will be here anon.

Mist. Ford. I am vndone, the knight is here :

Mist. Page. Why then you are vtterly sham'd, and hee's but a dead man. What a woman are you ? Away with him, away with him ; better shame then murder.

Mis. Ford.

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Mist. Ford. Which way should he goe? How should I bestow him? Shall I put him into the basket againe?

Fal. No, Ile come no more i'th basket:

May I not goe out ere he come?

Mist. Page. Alas: three of master *Fords* brothers watch the doore with pistols, that none shall issue out: otherwise you might slip away ere hee came: But what make you heere?

Fal. What shall I doe? Ile creepe vp into the chimney.

Mis. Ford. There they alwayes vse to discharge their birding-peece: creepe into the kill-hole.

Fal. Where is it?

Mis. Ford. Hee will seeke there on my word; neyther presse, coffer, chest, trunke, well, vault, but hee hath an abstract for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his note; there is no hiding you in the house.

Fal. Ile goe out then:

Mis. Ford. If you you goe out in your owne semblance, you die fir *Iohn*, vnlesse you go out disguis'd.

Mis. Ford. How might we disguise him?

Mis. Page. Alas the day I know not, there is no womans gowne bigge enough for him: otherwise he might put on a hat, a muffler, and kerchiefe, and so escape.

Fal. Good hearts, diuise something; any extremitie, rather then a mischiefe.

Mis. Ford. My maids aunt the fat woman of *Brainford*, has a gowne aboue.

Mis. Page. On my word it will serue him: shee's as big as he is; and there's her thrum'd hat, and her muffler' too: run vp fir *Iohn*.

Mis. Ford. Go, go, sweet fir *Iohn*: mistris *Page* and I will looke some linnen for your head.

Mis. Page. Quicke, quicke, wee'le come dresse you straight: put on the gowne the while.

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Mis. Ford. I would my husband would meete him in this shape ; he cannot abide the old woman of *Brainford* ; hee sweares she's a witch, forbad her my house, and hath threatened to beate her.

Mis. Page. Heauen guide him to thy husbands cudgell ; and the diuell guide his cudgell afterwards.

Mis. Ford. But is my husband comming ?

Mis. Page. I in good sadnesse is hee, and talkes of the basket too, howsoeuer he hath had intelligence.

Mis. Ford. Wee'l try that : for Ile appoint my men to carry the basket againe, to meete him at the doore with it, as they did last time.

Mis. Page. Nay, but hee'l be heere presently : let's goe dresse him like the witch of *Brainford*.

Mis. Ford. Ile first direct my men, what they shall do with the basket : Goe vp, Ile bring linnen for him straight.

Mis. Page. Hang him dishonest varlet,
We cannot misuse enough :
We'll leave a prooffe by that which we will doe,
Wiues may be merry, and yet honest too :
We doe not acte that often, iest, and laugh,
'Tis old, but true, still swine eats all the draugh.

Mis. Ford. Go Sirs, take the bas basket againe on your shoulders : your master is hard at doore : if he bid you set it downe, obey him ; quickly, dispatch.

1 *Ser.* Come, come, take it vp.

2 *Ser.* Pray heauen it be not full of knight againe.

1 *Ser.* I hope not, I had lief as beare so much lead..

Ford. I, but if it proue true (master *Page*) haue you any way then to vnfoole mee againe. Set downe the basket villain : some body call my wife : youth in a basket : Oh you panderly rascals, there's a knot : a gin, a packe, a conspiracie against mee. Now shall the diuel be sham'd. What wife

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wife I say : Come, come forth : behold what honest cloathes you send forth to bleaching.

Page. Why, this passes master *Ford*, your are not to goe loose any longer, you must be pinnion'd.

Euans. Why, this is lunaticks : this is madde, as a mad dogge.

Shal. Indeed master *Ford*, this is not well indeed.

Ford. So say I too sir, come hither mistress *Ford* mistress *Ford*, the honest woman, the modest wife, the vertuous creature, that hath the iealous foole to her husband : I suspect without cause (mistress) do I ?

Mist. Ford. Heauen be my witnesse you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

Ford. Well said brazen-face, hold it out : Come forth firrah.

Page. This passes.

Mist. Ford. Are you not asham'd, let the cloths alone.

Ford. I shall finde you anon.

Euan. 'Tis vnreasonable; will you take vp your wiues cloathes? come, away.

Ford. Empty the basket I say.

Mist. Ford. Why man, why ?

Ford. Master *Page*, as I am a man, there was one conuay'd out of my house yesterday in this basket : why may not he be there againe, in my house I am sure hee is ; my intelligence is true, my iealousie is reasonable, plucke mee out all the linnen.

Mist. Ford. If you find a man there, he shall dye a fleas death.

Page. Heer's no man.

Shal. By my fidelity this is not well master *Ford* : this wrongs you.

Euans. Master *Ford*, you must pray, and not follow the imaginations of your owne heart : this is iealousies.

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Ford. Well, hee's not heere I seeke for.

Page. No, nor no where else but in your braine.

Ford. Helpe to searh my house this one time : If I find not what I seeke, shew no colour for my extremity ; let me for euer be your table sport ; let them say of me, as iealous as *Ford*, that searh'd a hollow wall-nut for his wiues lemman. Satisfie me once more, once more serch with me.

Mist. Ford. What hoa (mistris *Page*,) come you and the old woman downe ; my husband will come into the chamber.

Ford. Old woman ? what old womans that ?

M. Ford. Why it is my maids aunt of *Brainford*.

Ford. A witch, a queane, an olde couzening queane : haue I not forbid her my house. She comes of errands, do's she ? we are simple men, wee doe not know what's brought to passe vnder the profession of fortune telling, she workes by charmes, by spels, by th' figure, and such dawbry as this is, beyond our element : wee know nothing. Come downe you witch, you hagge you, come downe I say.

Mis. Ford. Nay, good sweet husband, good gentlemen, let him not strike the old woman.

Mis. Page. Come mother *Prat*, come giue me your hand.

Ford. Ile *Prat*-her : out of my doore, you witch, you hagge, you baggage, you poulcat, you runnion, out, out : Ile coniure you, Ile fortune-tell you.

Mis. Page. Are you not asham'd ?

I thinke you haue kill'd the poore woman.

Mis. Ford. Nay hee will do it, 'tis a goodly credit for you.

Ford. Hang her witch.

Euan. By yea, and no, I thinke the o'man is a witch indeede : I like not when a o'mans has a great peard ; I spie a great peard vnder his muffler.

Ford. Will you follow gentlemen, I beseech you follow ; see
but

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but the issue of my ieaiousie. If I cry out thus vpon no traile, neuer trust me when I open againe.

Page. Let's obey his humour a little further ;
Come gentlemen.

Mis. Page. Trust me he beate him most pittifully.

Mis. Ford. Nay by th' masse that he did not ; he beate him most vn timerely, me thought.

Mis. Page. Ile haue the cudgell hallow'd, and hung ore the altar, it hath done meritorious seruice.

Mis. Ford. What thinke you ? May wee with the warrant of woman-hood, and the witnesse of a good conscience, pursue him with any further reuenge ?

M. Page. The spirit of wantonnesse is sure scar'd out of him, if the diuell haue him not in fee-simple, with find and recouery, he will neuer (I thinke) in the way of waste, attempt vs againe.

Mis. Ford. Shall we tell our husbands how wee haue seru'd him ?

Mis. Page. Yes, by all meanes : if it be but to scrape the figures out of your husbands braines : if they can find in their hearts, the poore vnuertuous fat knight shall be any further afflicted, we two will bee still the ministers.

Mis. Ford. Ile warrant, they'l haue him publicly sham'd and me thinks there would be no period to iest, should he not be publicly sham'd.

Mis. Page. Come, to the Forge with it, then shape it : I then shape it : I would not have things coole. *Exeunt.*

Scœna Tertia.

Enter Host and Bardolfe.

Bar. Sir, the *Germane* desires to haue three of your horses ; the duke himselfe will be to morrow at court, and they are going to meete him.

Host. What duke should that be comes so secretly ? I heare

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not of him in the court : let me speake with the gentlemen, they speake *English* ?

Bar. I Sir, Ile call him to you.

Hof. They shall haue my horses, but Ile make them pay : Ile fauce them, they haue had my houses a weeke at commaund. I haue turn'd away my other guests, they must come off, Ile fauce them, come. *Exeunt.*

Scoena Quarta.

Enter Page, Ford, *mistris* Page, *mistris* Ford, and Euans.

Euan. 'Tis one of the best discretions of a o'mans as euer I did looke vpon.

Page. And did he send you both these letters at an instant ?

Mist. Page. Within a quarter of an houre.

Ford. Pardon me (wife) henceforth doe what thou wilt : I rather will suspect the funne with gold,
Then thee with wantonnes : Now doth thy honor stand
(In him that was of late an heretike)
As firme as faith.

Page. 'Tis well, 'tis well, no more :
Be not as extreme in submission, as in offence,
But let our plot go forward : Let our wiues
Yet once againe (to make vs publike sport)
Appoint a meeting with this old fat-fellow,
Where we may take him, and disgrace him for it.

Ford. There is no better way then that they spoke of.

Page. How ? to send him word they'll meet him in the parke at midnight ? Fie, fie, he'll never come.

Euan. You say he has bin throwne in the riuers : and has bin greeuously peaten, as an old o'man : me-thinkes there should be terror in him, that hee should not come : Me-thinkes his flesh is punish'd, hee shall haue no desires,

Page.

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Page. So thinke I too.

M. Ford. Devise but how you'l vse him when he comes,
and let us two deuise to bring him thither.

Mif. Page. There is an old tale goes, that *Herne* the hunter
(Sometime a keeper heere in *Windsor* forrest)

Doth all the winter time, at still midnight,
Walke round about an Oake, with great rag'd-hornes,
And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,
And make milch-kine yeeld blood, and shakes a chaine
In a most hideous and dredfull manner.

You haue heard of such a spirit, and well you know
The superstitious idle-headed-eld

Receiu'd, and did deliuer to onr age

This tale of *Herne* the hunter, for a truth.

Page. Why yet there want not many that do feare
In deepe of night to walke by this *Hernes* oake.

But what of this ?

Mif. Ford. Marry this is our deuise,
That *Falstaffe* at that oake shall meete with vs.

Page. Well, let it not be doubted but he'll come,
And in this shape, when you haue brought him thether,
What shall be done with him ? What is your plot ?

Mif. Page. That likewise haue we thoght vpon and thus:

Nan Page (my daughter) and my little sonne,
And three or four more of their growth, wee'l dresse
Like vrchins, ouphes, and fairies, greene and white,
With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads
And rattles in their hands ; vpon a sodaine,
As *Falstaffe*, she, and I, are newly met,
Let them from forth a saw-pit rush at once
With some diffused song : vpon their sight
We two, in great amazednesse will flye :
Then let them all encircle him about,
And fairy-like to pinch the vncleane knight ;

And

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And aske him why that houre of fairy reuell,
In their so sacred pathes, he dares to tread
In shape prophane.

Ford. And till he tell the truth,
Let the supposed fairies pinch him, fount,
And burne him with their Tapers.

Mis. Page. The truth being knowne.
We'll all present our selues; dis-horne the spirit,
And mocke him home to *Windsor*.

Ford. The children must
Be practis'd well to this, or they'll neu'r doo't.

Euan. I will teach the children their behauiours and I will:
be like a iacke-an-apes also, to burne the knight with my
taber.

Ford. That will be excellent,
Ile go buy them vizards.

Mis. Page. My *Nan* shall be the queene of all the fairies,
finely attired in a robe of white.

Page. That silke will I go buy, and in that time
Shall M. *Slender* steale my *Nan* away,
And marry her at *Eaton* : go, send to *Falstaffe* straight.

Ford. Nay. Ile to him againe in the name of *Broome*,
Hee'l tell me all his purpose : sure hee'l come.

Mis. Page. Feare not you that ; go get vs properties
And tricking for our fairies.

Euans. Let vs about it,
It is admirable pleasures, and ferry honest knaueries.

Mis. Page. Go *Mis. Ford*,
Send quickly to sir *Iohn*, to know his minde ;
Ile to the doctor, he hath my good will,
And none but he to marry with *Nan Page* ;
That *Slender* (though well landed) is an ideot,
And he, my husband best of all affects ;
The doctor is well monied, and friends

Potent

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Potent at court ; he, none but he shall haue her,
Though twenty thousand worthier come to craue her.

Scoena Quarta.

Enter Host, Simple, Falstaffe, Bardolfe, Euans, Caius,
Quickly.

Host. What would thou haue ? (boore) what ? (thick skin)
speake, breathe, discusse ; breefe, short, quicke, nap.

Simp. Marry sir, I come to speake with sir *John Falstaffe*,
from master *Slender*.

Host. There's his chamber, his house, his castle his standing-
bed and truckle-bed : 'tis painted about with the story of the
Prodigall fresh and new : goe, knocke and call : hee'l speake
like an *Anthropophaginian* vnto thee ; knocke I say.

Simp. There's an olde woman, a fat woman gone vp into
his chamber ; He be so bold as stay sir till she come downe I
come to speake with her indeed.

Host. Ha ? a fat woman ? the knight may be robb'd ; He
call. Bully-knight, bully sir *John* ; speake from thy lungs
military ; art thou there ? it is thine host, thine *Ephesian*
cals.

Fal. How now, mine host ?

Host. Here's a *Bohemian-Tartar* taries the comming downe
of thy fat-woman. Let her descend (bully) let her descend ;
my chambers are honourable ; Fie, priuacy ? fie.

Fal. There was (mine host) an old-fat-woman euen now
with me, but she's gone.

Simp. Pray you sir, was't not the wise-woman of *Brain-*
ford ?

Fal. I marry was it (mussel-shell) what would you with her ?

Simp. My master (sir) my master *Slender*, sent to her seeing
her go thorough the streets, to know (sir) whether one *Nim*
(sir) that beguil'd him of a chaine, had the chaine or no.

Fal.

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Fal. I spake with the old woman about it.

Sim. And what sayes she, I pray sir?

Fal. Marry shee sayes, that the very same man that beguil'd master *Slender* of his chaine, cozon'd him of it.

Sim. I would I could haue spoken with the woman herselfe, I had other things to haue spoken with her too, from him.

Fal. What are they? let vs know.

Hofst. I; come, quicke.

Fal. I may not conceale them (sir.)

Hofst. Conceale them, or thou di'st.

Sim. Why sir, they were nothing but about mistress *Anne Page*, to know if it were my master fortune to haue her, or no.

Fal. 'Tis 'tis his fortune.

Sim. What sir?

Fal. To haue her, or no: goe; say the woman told me so.

Simple. May I be bold to say so sir?

Fal. I sir: like who more bold.

Sim. I thanke your worship: I shall make my master glad with these tydings.

Hofst. Thou are clearkly; thou are clearkly (sir *Iohn*) was there a wise woman with thee?

Fal. I that there was (mine host) one that hath taught me more wit, then euer I learn'd before in my life: and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.

Bar. Out alas (sir) cozonage: meere cozonage.

Hofst. Where be my horses? speake well of them varletto.

Bar. Run away with the cozoners: for so soone as I came beyond *Eaton*, they threw me off, from behinde one of them, in a slough of myre; and set spurres, and away; like three *Germane*-diuels; three doctor *Faustasses*.

Hofst. They are gone but to meete the duke (villaine) doe not say they be fled: *Germanes* are honest men.

Euans.

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Euans. Where is mine host ?

Host. What is the matter fir ?

Euan. Haue a care of your entertainments: there is a friend of mine come to towne, tels mee there is three cozen-*Iermans*, that has cozened all the hosts of *Readins*, of *Maidenhead*; of *Cole-brooke*, of horses and money: I tell you for good will (looke you) you are wise, and full of gibes, and vlouting-stocks: and 'tis not conuenient you should be cozoned. Fare you well.

Cai. Ver' is mine host de iarteere ?

Host. Here (master doctör) in perplexitie, and doubtfull dilemma.

Cai. I cannot tell vat is dat: but it is tell-a-me, dat you make grand preparation for a duke de *Iamanie*: by my trot; der is no duke that the court is know, to come; I tell you for good will; adieu.

Host. Huy and cry, (villaine) goe: assist me knight, I am vndone: fly, run: huy, and cry (villaine) I am vndone.

Fal. I would all the world might bee cozond, for I haue beene cozond and beaten too: if it should come to the eare of the court, how I haue beene transformed; and how my transformation hath beene wash'd, and cudgeld, they would melt me out of my fat drop by drop, and liquor fishermens-boots with me: I warrant they would whip mee with their fine wits, till I were as crest-falne as a dride-peare I neur prosper'd since I forswore my selfe at *Primero*: well, if my winde were but long enough; I would repent; now? whence come you?

Qui. From the two parties forfooth.

Fal. The diuell take one partie, and his dam the other: and so they shall bee both bestowed; I haue suffer'd more for their fakes; more then the villanous inconstancy of man's disposition is able to beare.

Qui. And haue not they suffer'd? yes, I warrant; speciously

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ciously one of them ; mistris *Ford* (good heart) is beaten blacke and blew, that you cannot see a white spot about her.

Fal. What tell'st thou mee of blacke, and blew ? I was beaten my selfe into all the colours of the raine-bow : and I was like to be apprehended for the witch of *Brainesford*, but that my admirable dexteritie of wit, my counterfeiting the action of an old woman deliuer'd mee, the knaue constable had set me ith' stocks, ith' common stocks, for a witch.

Qui. Sir : let me speake with you in your chamber, you shall heare how things goe, and (I warrant) to your content : here is a letter will say somewhat : (good-hearts) what a-doe here is to bring you together ? Sure, one of you do's not serue heauen well, that you are so cross'd.

Fal. Come vp into my chamber.

Exeunt.

Scena Sexta.

Enter Fenton, Host,

Host. Master *Fenton*, talke not to me, my minde is heauy : I will giue ouer all.

Fen. Yet heare me speake ; assist me in my purpose,
And (as I am a gentleman) Ile giue thee
A hundred pound in gold, more then your losse.

Host. I will heare you (master *Fenton*) and I will (at the least) keepe your counsell.

Fen. From time to time, I haue acquainted you
With the deate loue I beare to faire *Anne Page*,
Who, mutually, hath answer'd my affection,
(So farre forth, as her selfe might be her chooser)
Euen to my wish ; I haue a letter from her
Of such contents, as you will wonder at ;
The mirth whereof, so larded with my matter,
That neither (singly) can be manifested
Without the shew of both : fat *Falstaffe*

Hath

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Hath a great scene; the image of the iest.
 Ile show you here at large (harke good mine host;)
 To night at *Hernes-Oke*, iust 'twixt twelue and one,
 Must my sweet *Nan* present the fairie queene;
 The purpose why, is here: in which disguise
 While other iests are something ranke on foote,
 Her father hath commanded her to slip
 Away with *Slender*, and with him, at *Eaton*
 Immediately to marry; she hath consented. Now sir,
 Her mother, (euen strong against that match
 And firme for doctour *Caius*) hath appointed
 That he shall likewise shuffle her away,
 While other sports are talking of their mindes,
 And at the *Deanry*, where a priest attends
 Strait marry her: to this her mothers plot
 She (seemingly obedient) likewise hath
 Made promise to the doctour; now, thus it rests,
 Her father meanes she shall be all in white;
 And in that habit, when *Slender* sees his time
 To take her by the hand, and bid her goe.
 She shall go with him; her mother hath intended
 (The better to deuote her to the doctour;
 For they must all be mask'd, and vizarded)
 That quaint in greene, she shall be loose en-roab'd,
 With ribonds pendant, flaring 'bout her head;
 And when the doctour spies his vantage ripe,
 To pinch her by the hand, and on that token,
 The maid hath giuen consent to go with him.

Host. Which meanes she to deceiue? father, or mother.

Fen. Both (my good host) to go along with me:
 And heere it rests, that you'l procure the vicar
 To stay for me at church, 'twixt twelue, and one,
 And in the lawfull name of marrying,
 To giue our hearts vnited ceremony.

Host.

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Hof. Well, husband your deuice ; Ile to the vicar,
Bring you the maid, your shall not lacke a priest.

Fen. So shall I euermore be bound to thee ;
Besides, Ile make a present recompence.

Exeunt.

ACTUS QUINTUS.

Scœna Prima.

Enter Falstaffe, Quickly and Ford.

Fal. Pre'thee no more prating ; goe, ile hold, this is the third time : I hope good lucke lies in odde numbers : away, go, they say there is diuinity in odde numbers, either in natiuity, chance, or death : away.

Qui. Ile prouide you a chaine, and Ile do what I can to get you a paire of hornes.

Fal. Away I say, time weares, hold up your head and mince. How now master *Broome* ? Master *Broome*, the matter will bee known to night, or neuer : bee you in the parke about midnight, at *Hernes-oake*, and you shall see wonders.

Ford. Went you not to her yesterday (sir) as you told me you had appointed ?

Fal. I went to her, (master *Broome*) as you see, like a poore-old-man, but I came from her (master *Broome*) like a poore-old-woman ; that same knaue (*Ford* her husband) hath the finest mad diuell of ieaiousie in him (master *Broome*) that euer gouern'd frensie. I will tell you, he beate me greeuously, in the shape of a woman : (for in the shape of man (master *Broome*) I feare not *Goliath* with a weauers beame, because I know also, life is a shuttle) I am in hast, go along with mee, Ile tell you all (master *Broome* :) since I pluckt geese, plaide trewant, and whipt top, I knew not what 'twas to be beaten, till lately. Follow me, Ile tell you strange things of this knaue

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knaue *Ford*, on whom to night I will be reuenged, and I will deliuer his wife into your hand. Follow, strange things in hand (*maſter Broome*) follow. *Exeunt.*

Scena Secunda.

Enter Page, Shallow, Slender.

Page. Come, come : wee'll couch i'th caſtle-ditch, till we ſee the light of our fairies. Remember ſonne *Slender*, my

Slen. I forſooth, I haue ſpoke with her, and wee haue a nay-word, how to know one another. I come to her in white, and cry mum ; ſhe cries budget, and by that we know one another.

Shal. That's good too : but what needes either your Mum, or her Budget ? The white will decipher her well enough. It hath ſtrooke ten a'clocke.

Page. The night is darke, light and ſpirits will become it well : heauen proſper our ſport. No man meanes euill but the deuill, and we ſhall know him by his hornes. Lets away : follow me. *Exeunt.*

Scœna Tertia.

Enter miſ. Page, miſ. Ford, Caius.

Miſ. Page. Maſter doctör, my daughter is in green, when you ſee your time, take her by the hand, away with her to the deanerie, and diſpatch it quickly ; goe before into the parke ; we two muſt goe together.

Cai. I know vat I haue to do, adieu.

Miſ. Page. Fare you well (ſir :) my huſband will not reioyce ſo much at the abuſe of *Falſtaffe*, as he will chafe at the doctör's marrying my daughter ; but 'tis no matter ; better a little chiding, then a great deale of heart-breake.

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Mis. Ford. Where is *Nan* now ? and her troope of fairies ?
and the *Welch-deuill Herne* ?

Mist. Page. They are couch'd in a pit hard by *Hernes*
oake, with obscur'd lights ; which at the very instant of *Fal-*
staffes and our meeting, they will at once display to the night.

Mis. Ford. That cannot choose but amaze him.

Mis. Page. If he be not amaz'd, he will be mock'd ; If he
be amaz'd, he will euery way be mock'd.

Mis. Ford. Wee'll betray him finely.

Mist. Page. Against such lewdsters, and their lechery,
Those that betray them, do no treachery.

Mist. Ford. The houre drawes-on ; to the oake, to the oake.

Exeunt.

Scœna Quarta.

Enter Euans and Fairies.

Euans. Trib, trib fairies ; come, and remember your parts :
be pold (I pray you) follow me into the pit, and when I giue
the watch-'ords, do as I pid you ; come, come trib, trib.

Exeunt.

Scœna Quarta.

Enter Falstaffe, mistress Page, mistress Ford, Euans, Anne
Page, Fairies, Page, Ford, Quickly, Slender, Fenton, Caius,
Pistol.

Fal. The *Windfor*-bell hath stroke twelue : the minute
drawes on : Now the hot-bloodied-gods assist mee ; remember
Ioue, thou was't a bull for thy *Europa*, loue fet on thy hornes.
O powerfull loue, that in some respects makes a beast a man :
in some other, a man a beast. You were also (*Iupiter*) a swan,
for the loue of *Leda* : O omnipotent loue, how nere the god
drew to the complexion of a goose : a fault done first in the
forme

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forme of a beast, (O *Ioue*, a beastly fault :) and then another fault, in the semblance of a fowle, thinke on't (*Ioue*) a fowle-fault. When gods haue hot backes, what shall poore men doe? For me, I am heere a *Windfor* stagge, and the fattest (I thinke) i'th Forrest. Send me a coole rut-time (*Ioue*) or who can blame me to pisse my tallow? Who comes here? my doe?

M. Ford. Sir *Iohn*? Art thou there (my deere?)
My male-deere?

Fal. My doe, with the blacke scut? let the skie raine potatoes: let it thunder, to the tune of Greene-sleeues, haile-kissing comfit, and snow eringoes; let there come a tempest of prouocation, I will shelter me heere.

Mis. Ford. Mistris *Page* is come with me (sweet heart.)

Fal. Diuide me like a brib'd-bucke, each a haunch: I will keepe my sides to my selfe, my shoulders for the fellow of this walke; and my hornes I bequeath your husband. Am I a woodman, ha? Speake I like *Herne* the hunter? Why, now is *Cupid* a child of conscience, he makes restitution. As I am a true spirit, welcome.

M. Page. Alas, what noise?

M. Ford. Heauen forgiue our sinnes.

Fal. What should this be?

M. Ford. M. Page. Away, away.

Fal. I thinke the diuell will not haue me damn'd,
Lest the oyle that's in me should set hell on fire;
He would neuer else crosse me thus.

Enter Fairies.

Qui. Fairies blacke, gray, greene, and white,
You moone-shine reuellers, and shades of night.
You orphan heires of fixed destiny,
Attend your office, and your quality.
Crier *Hob-goblyn*, make the fairy Oyes.

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Pist. Elues, list your names : silence you aiery toyes.
Cricket, to *Windfore*-chimnies shalt thou leape ;
Where fires thou find'st vnrak'd, and hearths vnswep't,
There pinch the maids as blew as bill-berry,
Our radiant queene, hates slutttery.

Fal. They are fairies, he that speaks to them shall die,
He winke, and couch : no man their workes must cie.

Euan. Wher's *Bede* ? Go you, and where you finde a maid
That ere she sleepe has thrice her prayers said,
Raife up the organs of her fantasie,
Sleepe she as sound as carelesse infancie,
But those as sleepe, and thinke not on their sins,
Pinch them armes, legs, backes, shoulders, sides, and shins.

Qu. About, about :
Search *Windfor* castle (elues) within, and out :
Strew good lucke (ouphes) on euery sacred roome,
That it may stand till the perpetuall doome,
In state as wholsome, as in state 'tis fit,
Worthy the owner, and the owner it.
The feuerall chaires of order, looke you scowre
With iuyce of balme ; and euery precious flower,
Each faire instalment, coate, and seu'rall crest,
With loyall blazon, euermore be blest.
And nightly-meadow-fairies, looke you sing
Like to the garters-compasse, in a ring,
'Th' expresseure that it beares : greene let it be,
Mote fertile-fresh then all the field to see ;
And, *Hony soit qui mal-y-pence*, write
In emrold-tuffes, flowres purple, blew, and white,
Like saphire-pearle, and rich embroidery,
Buckled below faire knight-hoods bending knee ;
Fairies vse flowres for their characterie :

Away

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Away, disperse : but till 'tis one a clocke,
Our dance of custome, round about the oke
Of *Herne* the hunter, let vs not forget.

Eu. Pray you locke hand in hand : your selues in order set.
And twenty glo-wormes shall our lanthornes bee
To guide our measure round about the tree.
But stay, I smell a man of middle earth.

Fal. Heauens defend me from that *Welsh* fairy,
Left he transforme me to a peece of cheese.

Pistoll. Vilde worme, thou wast ore-look'd euen in thy
birth.

Qui. With triall-fire touch me his finger end ;
If he be chaste, the flame will backe descend
And turne him to no paine : but if he start,
It is the flesh of a corrupted hart.

Pist. A triall, come.

Euan. Come : will this wood take fire ?

Fal. Oh, oh, oh.

Qui. Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire.
About him (fairies) sing a scornfull rime,
And as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

The SONG.

Fie on sinnefull phantasie : fie on lust, and luxurie.

Lust is but a bloody fire, kindled with vnchaste desire,

Fed in heart whose flames aspire,

As thoughts do blow them higher and higher :

Pinch him (fairies) mutuall : pinch him for his villanie.

Pinch him, and burne him, and turne him about,

Till candles, and star-light, and moone-shine be out.

Page. Nay do not flye, I thinke we haue watcht you now ;
will none but *Herne* the hunter-serue your turne ?

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

M. Page. I pray you come, hold up the iest no higher.
Now (good sir *Iohn*) how like you *Windfor* wiues?
See you these husband? do not these faire yoakes
Become the forrest better then the towne?

Ford. Now sir, who's a cuckold now?
Master *Broome*, *Falstaffes* a knaue, a cuckoldy knaue,
Heere are his hornes master *Broome*;
And master *Broome*, he hath enioyed nothing of *Fords*, but
his buck-basket, his cudgell, and twenty pounds of money,
which must be paid to master *Broome*, his horses are arrested
for it, master *Broome*.

M. Ford. Sir *Iohn*, wee haue had ill lucke: wee could neuer
meete: I will neuer take you for my loue againe, but I will
alwayes count you my deere.

Fal. I doe begin to perceiue that I am made anasse.

Ford. I, and an oxe too; both the proofes are extant.

Fal. And these are not fairies;

I was three or foure times in the thought they were not fairies,
and yet the guiltinesse of my minde, the sodaine surprize of my
powers, droue the grossenesse of the foppery into a receiu'd
beleefe, in despight of the teeth of all rime and reason, that
they were fairies. See now how wit may bee made a lacke a-
Lent, when 'tis vpon ill imployment.

Euans. Sir *Iohn Falstaffe*, serue Got, and leaue your desires,
and fairies will not pinse you.

Ford. Well said fairy *Hugh*.

Euans. And leaue you your iéalouzies too, I pray you.

Ford. I will neuer mistrust my wife againe, till thou art able
to woo her in good *Englisb*.

Fal. Haue I laid my braine in the fun, and dri'de it, that
it wants matter to preuent so grosse ore-reaching as this?
Am I ridden with a *Welch* goate too? Shall I haue a coxcombe
of frize? Tis time I were choak'd with a peece of toasted
cheefe.

Euan.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Euan. Seefe is not good to giue putter ; your belly is all putter

Fal. Seefe, and putter ? Haue I liu'd to stand at the taunt of one, that makes fritters of *Englisb* ? This is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking through the realme.

Mis. Page. Why sir *Iohn*, doe you thinke though wee would haue thrust vertue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders, and haue giuen our selues without scruple to hell, that euer the deuill could haue made you our delight ?

Ford. What, a hodge-pudding ? a bag of flax ?

Mis. Page. A puffed man ?

Page. Old, cold, wither'd, and of intollerable entrailes ?

Ford. And one that is slanderous as *Sathan* ?

Page. And as poore as *Iob* ?

Ford. And as wicked as his wife ?

Euan. And giuen to fornications, and to tauernes, and sacke, and wine, and metheglins, and to drinkings and swearing, and starings ? priables and prables ?

Fal. Well, I am your theame : you haue the start of me, I am deiected : I am not able to answer the *Welch* flannell, ignorance it selfe is plummet ore me, vse mee as you will.

Ford. Marry sir, wee'l bring you to *Windsor* to one master *Broome*, that you haue cozon'd of money, to whom you should haue bin a pander : ouer and aboue that you haue suffer'd, I thinke, to repay that money will be a biting affliction.

Page. Yet be cheerefull knight : thou shalt eat a posset to night at my house, where I will desire thee to laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee : tell her master *Slender* hath married her daughter.

Mis. Ford. Doctors doubt that ;
If *Anne Page* be my daughter, she is (by this) doctour *Caius* wife.

Slen. Whoa hoe, hoe, father *Page*.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Page. Sonne? How now sonne?
Hane you dispatch'd?

Slen. Dispatch'd? Ile make the best in *Glostershire* know
on't: would I were hang'd la, else.

Page. Of what sonne?

Slen. I came yonder at *Eaton* to marry mistris *Anne Page*,
and she's a great lubberly boy. If it had not beene i'th church,
I would haue swing'd him, or hee should haue swing'd me.
If I did not thinke it had beene *Anne Page*, would I might
neuer stirre, and 'tis a post-masters boy.

Page. Vpon my life then, you tooke the wrong.

Slen. What neede you tell me that? I thinke so, when I
tooke a boy for a girle: If I had beene married to him, for all
he was in womans apparrell) I would not haue had him.

Page. Why this is your owne folly,
Did not I tell you how you should know my daughter, by
her garments?

Slen. I went to her in greene, and cried mum, and she cride
budget, as *Anne* and I had appointed, and yet it was not *Anne*,
but a post-masters boy.

M. Page. Good *George* be not angry, I knew of your pur-
pose: turn'd my daughter in white, and indeede shee is now
with the doctor at the denerie, and there married.

Cai. Ver is mistris *Page*: by Gar I am cozoned, I ha mar-
ried oon garfoon, a boy; oon pefant, by Gar. A boy, it is
not *An Page*, by Gar, I am cozoned.

Mif. Page. Why? did you take her in white?

Cai. I bee Gar, and 'tis a boy; be Gar Ile raise all *Windfor*.

Ford. This is strange: who hath got the right *Anne*?

Page. My heart misgiues me, here comes master *Fenton*.
How now master *Fenton*?

Anne. Pardon good father, good my mother pardon.

Page. Now mistris;
How chance you went not with master *Slender*?

Mif. Page.

THE MERRY WIUES OF WINDSOR.

Mis. Page. Why went you not with master doctor, maid?

Fen. You do amaze her: heare the truth of it.

You would haue married her most shamefully,
Where there was no proportion held in loue:
The truth is, she and I (long since contracted)
Are now so sure that nothing can dissolue vs;
Th' offence is holy, that she hath committed,
And this deceit looses the name of craft,
Of disobedience, or vnduteous title,
Since therein she doth euitate and shun
A thousand irreligious cursed houres
Which forced marriage would haue brought vpon her.

Ford. Stand not amaz'd, here is no remedie:
In loue, the heauens themselues do guide the state,
Money buyes lands, and wiues are sold by fate.

Fal. I am glad, though you haue tane a special stand to
strike at me, that your arrow hath glanc'd.

Page. Well, what remedy? *Fenton*, heauen giue thee ioy,
What cannot be eschew'd, must be embrac'd.

Fal. When night-dogges run, all sorts of deere are chac'd.

Mis. Page. Well, I will muse no further: master *Fenton*,
Heauen giue you many, many merry dayes:
Good husband, let vs euery one go home,
And laugh this sport ore by a countrie fire,
Sir Iohn and all.

Ford. Let it be so (*sir Iohn* :)
To master *Broome*, you yet shall hold your word,
For he, to night, shall lye with mistris *Ford*. *Exeunt.*

F I N I S.

the copies of the original. They were
made I met with in 1805. I was
sent with the first edition, and as the various
copies were put away, and I think it very
probable I should have been only with preference
to continue the work of the original, and perhaps
some other copies.

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☞ Since the Copies of the foregoing Play were sent to the Press, I met with that in 1619, collated by Mr. THEOBALD with the First Edition ; but as the various Readings were but few, and those of little if any Consequence, I thought the Title only worth preserving, as it confirms the Report of its having been first performed before Queen *Elizabeth*.

A M O S T
Pleasaunt and Excellent Conceited
C O M E D I E
O F
Syr IOHN FALSTAFFE,
A N D T H E
Merry Wives of Windsor.

E N T E R M I X E D
With fundrie variable and pleasing humors of Sr
HUGH the *Welch* Knight, JUSTICE SHALLOW,
and his wife Cousin M. SLENDER.

W I T H T H E
Swaggering Vaine of Ancient PISTOLL,
and Corporall NYM.

By WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

As it hath bene divers Times acted

By the Right Honourable my Lord CHAMBER-
LAINES Servants ;

Both before her MAJESTIE and else where.

L O N D O N :

Printed by T. C. for ARTHUR JOHNSON, and are to be sold
at his Shop, in Powles Church yard, at the Signe of the
Flower de Leuse and the Crowne. 1602.

Much ado about Nothing

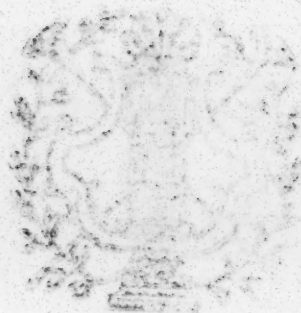
As it hath been sundry Times publicly acted

BY

The Right Honourable the Lord
Chamberlain his Excellency

WRITTEN BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



L O N D O N :

Printed by W. B. Whittaker, at the University Press, 1801.

Much adoe about Nothing.

As it hath been fundrie Times publikely acted

B Y

The Right Honourable, the Lord
CHAMBERLAINE his Seruants.

W R I T T E N B Y

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.



L O N D O N :

Printed by V. S. for ANDREW WISE, and WILLIAM ASPLEY.

1600.

Of this Play there is no other Edition in
Quarto.

Much adoe about Nothing.

Enter Leonato gouvernour of Messina, Innogen his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his neece, with a Messenger.

Leonato.

I Learne in this letter, that don *Peter* of *Arragon* comes this night to *Messina*.

Mess. He is very neare by this, he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leona. How many gentlemen haue you lost in this action ?

Mess. But few of any fort, and none of name.

Leona. A victory is twice it selfe, when the atchiuer brings home ful numbers : I find here, that don *Peter* hath bestowed much honour on a yong *Florentine* called *Claudio*.

Mess. Much deseru'd on his part, and equally remembred by don *Pedro*, he hath borne himselfe beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion, he hath indeed better bettred expectation then you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leo. He hath an vnckle here in *Messina* will be very much glad of it.

Mess. I haue already deliuered him letters, and there appeares much ioy in him, euen so much, that ioy could not shew it selfe modest enough, without a badge of bitternesse.

Leo. Did he breake out into teares ?

Mess. In great measure.

Leo.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Leo. A kind ouerflow of kindnesse, there are no faces truer than those that are so washt, how much better is it to weepe at ioy, then to ioy at weeping ?

Beatr. I pray you, is signior *Mountanto* returnd from the warres or no ?

Messen. I know none of that name, ladie, there was none such in the army of any fort.

Leonato. What is he that you aske for neece ?

Hero. My cosen meanes signior *Benedicke* of *Padua*.

Mess. O hee's returnd, and as pleasant as euer he was.

Bea. He set vp his bills here in *Messina*, and challengde *Cupid* at the flight, and my vncles foole reading the chalenge subscribde for *Cupid*, and challengde him at the burbolt: I pray you how many hath he kild and eaten in these warres? but how many hath he kild? for indeede I promised to eate all of his killing.

Leo. Faith neece you taxe signior *Benedicke* too much, but heele be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good seruice lady in these warres.

Beat. You had musty vittaile, and he hath holpe to eate it, he is a very valiaunt trencher man, he hath an excellent stomacke.

Mess. And a good souldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good souldiour to a lady, but what is he to a lord ?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man, stufft with al honourable vertues.

Beat. It is so indeed, he is no lesse then a stufte man, but for the stuffing wel, we are al mortall.

Leo. You must not, sir, mistake my neece, there is a kind of mery warre betwixt signior *Benedicke* and her, they neuer meet but there's a skirmish of wit betweene them.

Beat. Alas he gets nothing by that, in our last conflict, 4 of his fine wits went halting off, and now is the whole man gouerned

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

uernd with one, so that if he haue wit enough to keep himself warm, let him beare it for a difference between himself and his horse, for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature, who is his companion now? he hath euery month a new sworne brother.

Mess. Ist possible?

Beat. Very easily possible, he weares his faith but as the fashion of his hat, it euer changes with the next blocke.

Mess. I see lady the gentleman is not in your bookes.

Beat. No, and he were, I would burne my study, but I pray you who is his companion? is there no yong squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the diuell?

Mess. He is most in the companie of the right noble *Claudio*.

Beat. O Lord, he will hang vpon him like a disease, hee is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently madde, God help the noble *Claudio*, if he haue caught the *Benedicte*, it will cost him a thousand pound ere a be cured.

Mess. I will holde friends with you ladie.

Beat. Do good friend.

Leon. You will neuer runne madde niece.

Beat. No, not till a hote *January*.

Mess. Don *Pedro* is approacht.

Enter don Pedro, Claudio, Benedicke, Balthasar and Iohn the bastard.

Pedro. Good signior *Leonato*, are you come to meet your trouble: the fashion of the world is, to auoyd cost, and you incounter it.

Leon. Neuer came trouble to my house, in the likenesse of your grace, for trouble being gone, comfort should remaine: but when you depart from mee, sorrow abides, and happines takes his leaue.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly: I thincke this is your daughter.

Leonato. Her mother hath many times tolde me so.

Bened. Were you in doubt fir that you askt her?

Leonato. Signior *Benedicke*, no, for then were you a child.

Pedro. You haue it full *Benedicke*, wee may ghesse by this, what you are, being a man, truely the lady fathers her selfe: be happy lady, for you are like an honourable father.

Be. If signior *Leonato* be her father, she would not haue his head on her shoulders for all *Messina* as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, signior *Benedicke*, no body markes you.

Bene. What my deere lady disdaine! are you yet liuing?

Bea. Is it possible disdaine should die, while she hath such meete foode to feede it, as signior *Benedicke*? curtesie it selfe must conuert to disdaine, if you come in her prefence.

Bene. Then is curtesie a turne-coate, but it is certaine I am loued of all ladies, onelie you excepted: and I would I could finde in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truely I loue none.

Beat. A deere happinesse to women, they would else haue beene troubled with a pernicious suter, I thanke God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that, I had rather heare my dog barke at a crow, than a man sweare he loues me.

Bene. God keepe your ladyship stil in that mind, so some gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratcht face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, and twere such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrat teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue, is better than a beast of yours.

Ben. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer, but keep your way a Gods name, I haue done.

Beat.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Beat. You alwayes end with a iades tricke, I knowe you of olde.

Pedro. That is the summe of all : *Leonato*, signior *Claudio*, and signior *Benedicke*, my deere friend *Leonato*, hath inuited you all, I tell him we shall stay here, at the least a moneth, and he heartily praies some occasion may detaine vs longer, I dare sweare he is no hypocrite, but praies from his heart.

Leon. If you sweare, my lord, you shall not be forsworne, let mee bidde you welcome, my lord, being reconciled to the prince your brother : I owe you all duetie.

John. I thanke you, I am not of many wordes, but I thanke you.

Leon. Please it your grace leade on ?

Pedro. Your hand *Leonato*, we wil go together.

Excunt. Manent Benedicke and Claudio.

Clau. *Benedicke*, didst thou note the daughter of signior *Leonato* ?

Bene. I noted her not, but I lookte on her,

Clau. Is she not a modest yong ladie ?

Bene. Do you question me as an honest man should doe, for my simple true iudgement ? or would you haue me speake after my custome, as being a professed tyrant to their sex ?

Claudio. No, I pray thee speake in sober iudgement.

Bene. Why yfaith me thinks shees too low for a hie praise, too browne for a faire praise, and too litle for a great praise, onlie this commendation I can affoord her, that were shee other then she is, she were vnhanfome, and being no other, but as she is, I do not like her.

Claudio. Thou thinkest I am in sport, I pray thee tell mee truelie how thou lik'st her.

Bene. Would you buie her that you enquier after her ?

Claudio. Can the world buie such a iewel ?

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Bene. Yea, and a case to putte it into, but speake you this with a sad brow? or doe you play the flowting iacke, to tell vs *Cupid* is a good hare-finder, and *Vulcan* a rare carpenter: Come, in what key shall a man take you to go in the song?

Claudio. In mine eie, shee is the sweetest ladie, that euer I lookt on.

Bened. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: theres her cosin, and she were not possesst with a fury, exceeds her as much in beautie, as the first of *Maie* dooth the last of *December*: but I hope you haue no intent to turne husband, haue you?

Claudio. I would scarce trust my selfe, though I had sworne the contrarie, if *Hero* would be my wife.

Bened. Ist come to this? in faith hath not the worlde one man but he will weare his cappe with suspition? shall I neuer see a batcheller of three score againe? go to yfaith, and thou wilt needes thrust thy necke into a yoke, weare the print of it, and sigh away Sundaies: looke, don *Pedro* is returned to seeke you.

Enter don Pedro, Iohn the bastard.

Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to *Leonatoes*?

Bene. I would your grace would constraine me to tell.

Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Ben. You heare, count *Claudio*, I can be secret as a dumb man, I woulde haue you thinke so (but on my allegiance, marke you this, on my allegiance) he is in loue, with who? now that is your graces part: marke how short his answer is, with *Hero Leonatoes* short daughter.

Clau. If this were so, so were it vttered.

Bened. Like the olde tale, my lord, it is not so, nor twas not so: but indeede, God forbid it should be so.

Claudio.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Claudio. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

Pedro. Amen, if you loue her, for the lady is very well worthy.

Claudio. You speake this to fetch me in, my lord.

Pedro. By my troth I speake my thought.

Claudio. And in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Bened. And by my two faiths and troths, my lorde, I spoke mine.

Clau. That I loue her, I feele.

Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bened. That I neither feele how she should be loued, nor know how she should be worthie, is the opinion that fire can not melt out of me, I will die in it at the stake.

Pedro. Thou wast euer an obstinate heretique in the despight of beauty.

Clau. And neuer could maintaine his part, but in the force of his wil.

Bene. That a woman conceiued me, I thanke her: that she brought me vp, I likewise giue her most humble thanks: but that I will haue a rechate winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an inuisible baldricke, all women shall pardon mee: because I will not doe them the wrong to mistrust any, I will doe my selfe the right to trust none: and the fine is, (for the which I may go the finer,) I will liue a bacheller.

Pedro. I shall see thee ere I die, looke pale with loue.

Bene. With anger, with sicknesse, or with hunger, my lord, not with loue: proue that euer I loose more blood with loue then I will get againe with drinking, picke out mine eies with a ballad-makers penne, and hang me vp at the doore of a brothel house for the signe of blinde *Cupid*.

Pedro. Well, if euer thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prooue a notable argument.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoote at me, and he that hits me, let him be clapt on the shoulder, and calld *Adam*.

Pedro. Well, as time shal trie: in time the sauage bull doth beare the yoake.

Bene. The sauage bull may, but if euer the sensible *Benedicke* beare it, plucke off the bulls hornes, and set them in my forehead, and let me be vildly painted, and in such great letters as they write, here is good horse to hyre: let them signifie vnder my signe, here you may see *Benedicke* the married man.

Claudio. If this should euer happen, thou wouldst be horn madde.

Pedro. Nay, if *Cupid* haue not spent all his quiver in *Venice*, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bened. I looke for an earthquake too then.

Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the howres, in the meane time, good signior *Benedicke*, repaire to *Leonatoes*, commend me to him, and tell him I will not faile him at supper, for indeede he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I haue almost matter enough in mee for suche an embassage, and so I commit you.

Clau. To the tuition of God: from my house if I had it.

Pedro. The sixt of *Iuly*: your louing friend *Benedicke*.

Bened. Nay mocke not, mocke not, the body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guardes are but slightly basted on neither, ere you flowt old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so I leane you. *exit.*

Claudio. My liege, your highnesse nowe may doe mee good.

Pedro. My loue is thine to teach, teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learne
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Clau. Hath *Leonato* any sonne, my lord?

Pedro.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Pedro. No childe but *Hero*, shees his onely heire:
Dooſt thou affect her *Claudio*?

Claudio. O my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I lookt vpon her with a ſouldiers eie,
That likt, but had a rougher taske in hand,
Than to drine liking to the name of loue:
But now I am returnde, and that warre-thoughts,
Haue left their places vacant: in their roomes,
Come thronging ſoft and delicate deſires,
All prompting mee how faire yong *Hero* is,
Saying I likt her ere I went to warres.

Pedro. Thou wilt be like a louer preſently,
And tire the hearer with a booke of words,
If thou doſt loue faire *Hero*, cheriſh it,
And I wil breake with hir, and with her father,
And thou ſhalt haue her: waſt not to this end,
That thou beganſt to twiſt ſo fine a ſtorie?

Clau. How ſweetly you do miniſter to loue,
That know loues griefe by his complexion!
But leſt my liking might too ſodaine ſeeme,
I would haue ſalude it with a longer treatiſe.

Pedro. What need the bridge much broder then the flood?
The faireſt graunt is the neceſſitie:
Looke what wil ſerue is fit: tis once, thou loueſt,
And I wil fit thee with the remedie,
I know we ſhall haue reuelling to night,
I wil aſſume thy part in ſome diſguiſe,
And tell faire *Hero* I am *Claudio*,
And in her boſome Ile vnclaſpe my heart,
And take her hearing priſoner with the force
And ſtrong incounter of my amorous tale:
Then after, to her father will I breake,

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

And the conclusion is, she shal be thine,
In praclife let vs put it presently.

Exeunt.

Enter Leonato and an old man brother to Leonato.

Leo. How now brother, where is my cosen your sonne, hath he prouided this musique?

Old. He is very busie about it, but brother, I can tell you strange newes that you yet dreamt not of.

Leo. Are they good?

Old. As the euent stamps them, but they haue a good couer: they shew well outward, the prince and count *Claudio* walking in a thicke pleached alley in mine orchard, were thus much ouer-heard by a man of mine: the prince discouered to *Claudio* that he loued my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a daunce, and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly breake with you of it.

Leo. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Old. A good sharp fellow, I wil send for him, and question him your selfe.

Leo. No, no, we wil hold it as a dreame, til it appeare it self: but I will acquaint my daughter withall, that she may bee the better prepared for an answer, if peraduenture this be true: go you and tel hir of it: coosins, you know what you haue to doe, O I crie you mercie friend, go you with me and I wil vse your skill: good cosin haue a care this busie time.

Exeunt.

Enter sir Iohn the bastard, and Conrade his companion.

Con. What the good yeere my lord, why are you thus out of measure fad?

Iohn. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds, therefore the fadnesse is without limit.

Con.

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Con. You should heare reason.

John. And when I haue heard it, what blessing brings it ?

Con. If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

John. I wonder that thou (being as thou saist, thou art, borne vnder *Saturne*) goest about to apply a morall medicine, to a mortifying mischiefe: I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I haue cause, and smile at no mans iests, eate when I haue stomack, and wait for no mans leisure: sleep when I am drowsie, and tend on no mans businesse, laugh when I am mery, and claw no man in his humor.

Con. Yea but you must not make the full shew of this till you may do it without controllment, you haue of late stood out against your brother, and he hath tane you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the faire weather that you make your self, it is needful that you frame the season for your owne haruest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, then a rose in his grace, and it better fits my bloud to be disdain'd of all, then to fashion a cariage to rob loue from any: in this (thogh I cannot be said to be a flatering honest man) it must not be denied but I am a plain dealing villaine, I am trusted with a mussel, and enfranchisde with a clogge, therefore I haue decreed, not to sing in my cage: if I had my mouth I would bite: if I had my liberty I would do my liking: in the mean time, let me be that I am, and seeke not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no vse of your discontent?

John. I make all vse of it, for I vse it only,
Who comes here? what newes *Borachio*?

Enter Borachio.

Bor. I came yonder from a great supper, the prince your brother is royally entertain'd by *Leonato*, and I can giue you intelligence of an intended mariage.

John

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John. Wil it serue for any model to build mischief on ?
what is he for a foole that betrothes himselfe to vnquietnesse ?

Bor. Mary it is your brothers right hand.

John. Who, the most exquisite *Claudio* ?

Bor. Euen he.

John. A proper squier, and who, and who, which way looks he ?

Bor. Mary one *Hero* the daughter and heire of *Leonato*.

John. A very forward *March-chicke*, how came you to this ?

Bor. Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was smoaking a musty roome, comes me the prince and *Claudio*, hand in hand in sad conference : I whipt me behind the arras, and there heard it agreed vpon, that the prince should wooe *Hero* for himselfe, and hauing obtain'd her, giue her to counte *Claudio*.

John. Come, come, let vs thither, this may proue food to my displeasure, that yong start-up hath all the glory of my ouerthrow : if I can crosse him any way, I blesse my selfe euery way, you are both sure, and wil assist me.

Conr. To the death my lord.

John. Let vs to the great supper, their cheere is the greater that I am subdued, would the cooke were a my mind, shall we go proue whats to be done ?

Bor. Weele wait vpon your lordship.

Exit.

Enter Leonato, his brother, his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his neece, and a kinsman.

Leonato. Was not counte *John* here at supper ?

Brother. I saw him not.

Beatrice. How tartely that gentleman lookes, I neuer can see him but I am heart-burn'd an hower after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beatrice. He were an excellent man that were made iust in the mid-way between him and *Benedick*, the one is too like
an

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an image and saies nothing, and the other too like my ladies eldest sonne, euermore tatling.

Leonato. Then halfe signior *Benedickes* tongue in counte *Iohns* mouth, and halfe counte *Iohns* melancholy in signior *Benedickes* face.

Beatrice. With a good legge and a good foote vnckle, and money inough in his purse, such a man would winne any woman in the world if a could get her good will.

Leonato. By my troth neece thou wilt neuer get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Brother. In faith shees too curst.

Beatrice. Too curst is more then curst, I shall lessen Gods sending that way, for it is saide, God sends a curst cow short hornes, but to a cow too curst, he sends none.

Leonato. So, by being too curst, God will send you no hornes.

Beatrice. Iust, if he send me no husband, for the which blessing, I am at him vpon my knees euery morning and euening : Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face, I had rather lie in the woollen !

Leonato. You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

Beatrice. What should I do with him, dresse him in my apparell and make him my waiting gentlewoman ? he that hath a beard, is more then a youth : and he that hath no beard, is lesse then a man : and he that is more then a youth, is not for me, and he that is lesse then a man, I am not for him, therefore I will euen take sixpence in earnest of the berrord, and leade his apes into hell.

Leonato. Well then, go you into hell.

Beatrice. No but to the gate, and there will the diuell meete me like an old cuckold with hornes on his head, and say, get you to heauen *Beatrice*, get you to heauen, heeres no place for you maids, so deliuer I vp my apes and away to faint

Peter :

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Peter : for the heauens, he shewes me where the batchellers sit, and there liue we as mery as the day is long.

Brother. Well neece, I trust you will be rulde by your father.

Beatrice. Yes faith, it is my cofens duetie to make cursie and say, father, as it please you : but yet for all that cofin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another cursie, and say, father, as it please me.

Leonato. Well neece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beatrice. Not til God make men of some other mettall then earth, would it not grieue a woman to be ouer-masterd with a peece of valiant dust ? to make an account of her life to a clod of waiward marle ? no vnckle, Ile none : *Adams* sonnes are my brethren, and truely I holde it a sinne to match in my kinned.

Leonato. Daughter, remember what I told you, if the prince do folicite you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beatrice. The fault will be in the musique cofin, if you be not wooed in good time : if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in euery thing, and so daunce out the answer, for here me *Hero*, wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a *Scotch* ijgge, a measure, and a cinquepace : the first suite is hot and hasty like a *Scotch* ijgge (and ful as fantastickall) the wedding manerly modest (as a measure) full of state and aunchentry, and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinquepace faster and faster, til he sincke into his graue.

Leonato. Cofin you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beatrice. I haue a good eie vnckle, I can see a church by day-light.

Leonato. The reuellers are entring brother, make good roome.

Enter

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*Enter Prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Benedicke, and Balthafer,
or dumb Iohn.*

Pedro. Lady will you walke about with your friend ?

Hero. So, you walke softly, and looke sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walke, and especially when I walk away.

Pedro. With me in your company.

Hero. I may say so when I please.

Pedro. And when please you to say so ?

Hero. When I like your fauour, for God defend the lute should be like the case.

Pedro. My visor is *Philemons* rooffe, within the house is loue.

Hero. Why then your visor should be thatcht.

Pedro. Speake low if you speake loue.

Bene. Well, I would you did like me.

Mar. So would not I for your owne sake, for I haue many ill qualities.

Bene. Which is one ?

Mar. I say my praiers alowd.

Bene. I loue you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dauncer.

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And God keepe him out of my sight when the daunce is done : answer clarke.

Balth. No more words, the clarke is answered.

Vrsula. I know you well enough, you are signior *Anthonio*.

Antho. At a word I am not.

Vrsula. I knowe you by the wagling of your head.

Antho. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Vrsula. You coulde neuer doe him so ill well, vnlesse you were the very man : heeres his drie hand vp and downe, you are he, you are he.

Antho.

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Antho. At a word, I am not.

Urfula. Come, come, do you thinke I do not know you by your excellent wit? can vertue hide it selfe? go to, mumme, you are he, graces will appeere, and theres an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who tolde you so?

Bened. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bened. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainefull, and that I had my good wit out of the hundred mery tales: wel, this was signior *Benedick* that said so.

Bened. Whats he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bened. Not I, beleeue me.

Beat. Did he neuer make you laugh?

Bened. I pray you what is he?

Beat. Why he is the princes ieafter, a very dul fool, only his gift is, in deuising impossible flaunders, none but libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villanie, for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beate him: I am sure he is in the fleete, I would he had boorded me.

Bene. When I know the gentleman, Ile tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do, heele but break a comparifon or two on me, which peraduēture, (not markt, or not laught at) strikes him into melancholy, and then theres a partridge wing faued, for the foole will eate no supper that night: wee must follow the leaders.

Bene. In euery good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they leade to any ill, I will leaue them at the next turning. *Dance.*

Exeunt.

John. Sure my brother is amorous on *Hero*, and hath with-drawne

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drawne her father to breake with him about it : the ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Borachio. And that is *Claudio*, I knowe him by his bearing.

John. Are not you signior *Benedicke* ?

Clau. You know me well, I am he.

John. Signior, you are very neere my brother in his loue, he is enamour'd on *Hero*, I pray you dissuade him from her, she is no equall for his birth, you may doe the parte of an honest man in it.

Claudio. How know you he loues her ?

John. I heard him sweare his affection.

Borac. So did I too, and he swore hee would marry her to night.

John. Come let vs to the banquet. *Exeunt. Manet Clau.*

Clau. Thus answer I in name of *Benedicke*,

But heare these ill newes with the eares of *Claudio* :

Tis certaine so, the prince wooes for himselfe,

Friendship is constant in all other things,

Saue in the office and affaires of loue :

Therefore all hearts in loue vse their owne tongues.

Let euery eie negotiate for it selfe,

And trust no agent : for beauty is a witch,

Against whose charmes, faith melteth into blood :

This is an accident of houely prooffe,

Which I mistrusted not : farewell therefore *Hero*.

Enter Benedicke.

Benedicke. Count *Claudio*.

Claudio. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me ?

Claudio. Whither ?

Bene. Euen to the next willow, about your owne busines, county : what fashion will you weare the garland of ? about
your

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your necke, like an vsurers chaine ? or vnder your arme, like a lieutenants scarffe ? you must weare it one way, for the prince hath got your *Hero*.

Claudio. I wish him ioy of her.

Bened. Why thats spoken like an honest drouier, so they fell bullockes : but did you thinke the prince would haue ferued you thus ?

Claudio. I pray you leaue me.

Benedicke. Ho now you strike like the blind man, twas the boy that stole your meate, and youle beate the post.

Claudio. If it will not be, ile leaue you.

Exit.

Benedicke. Alas poore hurt foule, now will hee creepe into fedges : but that my ladie *Beatrice* should know me, and not know mee : the princes foole ! hah, it may be I goe vnder that ritle because I am merry : yea but so I am apte to doe myfelfe wrong : I am not so reputed, it is the base (though bitter) disposition of *Beatrice*, that puts the world into her person, and so giues me out : well, ile be reuenged as I may.

Enter the Prince, Hero, Leonato, Iohn and Borachio, and Conrade.

Pedro. Now signior, wheres the counte, did you see him ?

Benedicke. Troth my lord, I haue played the part of ladie *Fame*, I found him heere as melancholy as a lodge in a warren, I tolde him, and I thinke I tolde him true, that your grace had got the goodwil of this yoong lady, and I offred him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to binde him vp a rod, as being worthie to bee whipt.

Pedro. To be whipt, whats his fault ?

Benedicke. The flatte transgression of a schoole-boy, who being ouer-ioyed with finding a birds nest, shewes jt his companion, and he steales it.

Pedro.

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Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? the transgression is in the stealer.

Benedicke. Yet it had not beene amisse the rodde had beene made, and the garland too, for the garland he might haue worn himselfe, and the rodde he might haue bestowed on you, who (as I take it) haue stolne his birds nest.

Pedro. I wil but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Benedicke. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.

Pedro. The ladie *Beatrice* hath a quarrell to you, the gentleman that daunst with her, told her shee is much wrongd by you.

Bened. O shee misusde me past the indurance of a blocke : an oake but with one greene leafe on it, would haue answered her : my very visor beganne to assume life, and scold with her : she tolde me, not thinking I had beene my selfe, that I was the princes iester, that I was duller than a great thawe, huddling iest vpon iest, with such impossible conueiance vpon me, that I stoode like a man at a marke, with a whole army shooting at me : she speakes poynyards, and euery word stabbes : if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no liuing neere her, shee would infect to the north starre : I woulde not marry her, though shee were indowed with al that *Adam* had left him before he transgrest, she would haue made *Hercules* haue turnd spit, yea, and haue cleft his club to make the fire too : come, talke not of her, you shall find her the infernall *Ate* in good apparell, I would to God some scholler woulde coniure her, for certainly, while she is heere, a man may liue as quiet in hell, as in a sanctuarie, and people sinne vpon purpose, because they would goe thither, so indeede all disquiet, horroure, and perturbation followes her.

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Enter Claudio and Beatrice.

Pedro. Looke heere she comes.

Benedicke. Will your grace command me any seruice to the worldes end? I will go on the slightest arrand now to the *Antypodes* that you can deuise to send mee on: I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the furthest inch of *Asia*: bring you the length of *Prester Iohns* foot: fetch you a haire off the great *Chams* beard: doe you any embassage to the *Pigmies*, rather than holde three words conference, with this harpy, you haue no imployment for me?

Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Benedicke. O God sir, heeres a dish I loue not, I cannot indure my lady tongue. *Exit.*

Pedro. Come lady, come, you haue lost the heart of signior *Benedicke*.

Beatrice. Indeed my lord, he lent it me awhile, and I gaue him vse for it, a double heart for his single one, mary once before he wonne it of me, with false dice, therefore your grace may well say I haue lost it.

Pedro. You haue put him downe lady, you haue put him downe.

Beatrice. So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prooue the mother of fooles: I haue brought counte *Claudio*, whom you sent me to seeke.

Pedro. Why how now counte, wherefore are you fad?

Claudio. Not fad my lord.

Pedro. How then? sicke?

Claudio. Neither, my lord.

Beatrice. The counte is neither fad, nor sicke, nor merry, nor well: but ciuill counte, ciuil as an orange, and something of that iealous complexion.

Pedro.

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Pedro. Ifaith lady, I think your blazon to be true, though Ile be sworne, if he be so, his conceit is false: heere *Claudio*, I haue wooed in thy name, and faire *Hero* is won, I haue broke with her father, and his good will obtained, name the day of marriage, and God giue thee ioy.

Leonato. Counte take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his grace hath made the match, and all grace say amen to it.

Beatrice. Speake counte, tis your qu.

Claudio. Silence is the perfectest herault of ioy, I were but little happy if I could say, how much? lady, as you are mine, I am yours, I giue away my selfe for you, and doate vpon the exchange.

Beat. Speake cosin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kisse, and let not him speake neither.

Pedro. Infaith lady you haue a merry heart.

Beatr. Yea my lord I thanke it, poore foole it keepes on the windy side of care, my coosin tells him in his eare that he is in her heart.

Clau. And so she doth coosin.

Beat. Good lord for aliance: thus goes euery one to the world but I, and I am sun-burnt, I may sit in a corner and crie, heigh ho for a husband.

Pedro. Lady *Beatrice*, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather haue one of your fathers getting: hath your grace ne're a brother like you? your father got excellent husbands if a maide coulde come by them.

Prince. Will you haue me? lady.

Beatr. No my lord, vnles I might haue another for working-daies, your grace is too costly to weare euery day: but I beseech your grace pardon me, I was born to speake all mirth, and no matter.

Prince. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry, best

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becomes you, for out a question, you were borne in a merry hower.

Beatr. No fure my lord, my mother cried, but then there was a starre daunst, and vnder that was I borne, cofins God giue you ioy.

Leonato. Neece, will you looke to those things I tolde you of?

Beat. I crie you mercy vncle, by your graces pardon.

Exit Beatrice.

Prince. By my troth a pleasant spirited lady.

Leon. Theres little of the melancholy element in her my lord, she is neuer sad, but when she sleeps, and not euer sad then: for I haue heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamt of vn happiness, and wakt her selfe with laughing.

Pedro. She cannot indure to heare tell of a husband.

Leonato. O by no meanes, she mockes al her wooers out of fute.

Prince. She were an excellent wife for *Benedick*.

Leonato. O lord, my lord, if they were but a weeke married, they would talke themselues madde.

Prince. Countie *Claudio*, when meane you to goe to church?

Clau. To morow my lord, time goes on crutches, til loue haue all his rites.

Leonato. Not til monday, my deare sonne, which is hence a iust seuennight, and a time too brieft too, to haue al things answer my mind.

Prince. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing, but I warrant thee *Claudio*, the time shall not go dully by vs, I wil in the interim, vndertake one of *Hercules* labors, which is, to bring signior *Benedick* and the lady *Beatrice* into a mountaine of affection, th'one with th'other, I would faine haue it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall giue you direction.

Leonato.

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Leonato. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights watchings.

Claud. And I my lord.

Prince. And you too gentle *Hero*?

Hero. I wil do any modest office, my lord, to help my cosin to a good husband.

Prince. And *Benedicke* is not the vnhopefullest husband that I know : thus farre can I praise him, he is of a noble strain, of approoued valour, and confirme honesty, I will teach you how to humour your cosin, that she shall fall in loue with *Benedicke*, and I, with your two helpes, wil so practise on *Benedicke*, that in dispiht of his quicke wit, and his queasie stomacke, he shall fall in loue with *Beatrice* : if we can do this, *Cupid* is no longer an archer, his glory shall bee ours, for we are the onely loue-gods, goe in with mee, and I will tell you my drift.

Exit.

Enter Iohn and Borachio.

Iohn. It is so, the counte *Claudio* shall marry the daughter of *Leonato*.

Bora. Yea my lord, but I can crosse it.

Iohn. Any barre, any crosse, any impediment, will be medicinal to me, I am sicke in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges euenly with mine, how canst thou crosse this marriage?

Bor. Not honestly my lord, but so couertly, that no dishonesty shall appeare in me.

Iohn. Shew me briefly how.

Bor. I thinke I told your lordship a yeere since, how much I am in the fauour of *Margaret*, the waiting gentlewoman to *Hero*.

Iohn. I remember.

Bor. I can at any vnseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to looke out at her ladies chamber window.

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John. What life is in that to be the death of this mariage ?

Bor. The poison of that lies in you to temper, goe you to the prince your brother, spare not to tell him, that he hath wronged his honor in marrying the renowned *Claudio*, whose estimation do you mightily hold vp, to a contaminated stale, such a one as *Hero*.

John. What prooffe shall I make of that ?

Bor. Prooffe enough, to misuse the prince, to vex *Claudio*, to vndoe *Hero*, and kill *Leonato*, looke you for any other issue ?

John. Onely to dispiight them I will endeavour any thing.

Bor. Go then, find me a meet houre, to draw don *Pedro* and the counte *Claudio* alone, tell them that you know that *Hero* loues me, intend a kind of zeale both to the prince and *Claudio* (as in loue of your brothers honor who hath made this match) and his friends reputation, who is thus like to bee cosen'd with the semblance of a maid, that you haue discouer'd thus : they wil scarcely beleue this without triall : offer them instances which shall beare no lesse likelihood, than to see me at her chamber window, heare me call *Margaret Hero*, heare *Marg.* terme me *Claudio*, and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding, for in the mean time, I wil so fashion the matter, that *Hero* shal be absent and there shal appeere such seeming truth of *Heroes* disloyaltie, that iealousie shal be cald assurance, and al the preparation ouerthrowne.

John. Grow this to what aduerse issue it can, I will put it in practise : be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducates.

Bor. Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presently go learne their day of marriage. *Exit.*

Enter Benedicke alone.

Bene. Boy.

Boy. Signior.

Bene.

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Bene. In my chamber window lies a booke, bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already sir.

Exit.

Bene. I know that, but I would haue thee hence and here againe. I do much wonder, that one man seeing how much an other man is a foole, when he dedicates his behauiours to loue, wil after he hath laught at such shallow follies in others, becom the argument of his owne scorne, by falling in loue, and such a man is *Claudio*, I haue knowne when there was no musique with him but the drumme and the fife, and now had he rather heare the taber and the pipe: I haue knowne when he would haue walkt ten mile afoot, to see a good armour, and now wil he lie ten nights awake caruing the fashion of a new dublet: he was woont to speake plaine, and to the purpose (like an honest man and a souldier) and now is he turnd ortography, his words are a very fantastical banquet, iust so many strange dishes: may I be so conuerted and see with these eies? I cannot tell, I thinke not: I wil not be sworne but loue may transforme me to an oyster, but Ile take my oath on it, till he haue made and oyster of me, he shall neuer make me such a foole: one woman is faire, yet I am well, an other is wife, yet I am well: an other vertuous, yet I am wel: but till all graces be in one woman, one womā shal not com in my grace: rich she shal be thats certain, wife, or Ile none, vertuous, or Ile neuer cheapen her: faire, or Ile neuer looke on her, mild, or come not neare me, noble, or not I for an angell, of good discourse, an excellent musitian, and her haire shall be of what colour it please God. Hah! the prince and monsieur loue, I wil hide me in the arbor.

Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio, musicke.

Prince. Come shall we heare this musique?

Claud. Yea my good lord: how stil the euening is,
As husht on purpose to grace harmonie!

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Prince. See you where *Benedicke* hath hid himselfe ?

Claud. O very wel my lord : the musique ended,
Weele fit the kid-foxe with a penny worth.

Enter Balthaser with musicke.

Prince. Come *Balthaser*, weele heare that song againe.

Balth. O good my lord, taxe not so bad a voice,
To flaunder musicke any more then once.

Prince. It is the witnesse still of excellencie,
To put a strange face on his owne perfection,
I pray thee sing, and let me wooc no more.

Balth. Because you talke of wooing I will sing,
Since many a wooer doth commence his sute,
To her he thinkes not worthy, yet he woos,
Yet will he sweare he loues.

Prince. Nay pray thee come,
Or if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Do it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes,
Theres not a note of mine thats worth the noting.

Prince. Why these are very crotchets that he speakes,
Note notes forsooth, and nothing.

Bene. Now diuine aire, now is his soule ravisht, is it not
strange that sheepes guts should hale foules out of mens bodies ?
well a horne for my mony when alls done.

The Song.

Sigh no more ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceiuers euer,
One foote in sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant neuer,
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blith and bonnie,
Conuerting all your foundes of woe,
Into hey nony nony.

Sing

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,
Of dumps so dull and heauy,
The fraud of men was euer so,
Since summer first was leauy,
Then sigh not so, &c.

Prince. By my troth a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer my lord.

Prince. Ha, no no faith, thou singst wel enough for a shift.

Ben. And he had bin a dog that should haue howld thus, they would haue hangd him, and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischeefe, I had as liue haue heard the night-rauen, come what plague could haue come after it.

Prince. Yea mary, doost thou heare *Balthasar*? I pray thee get vs some excellent musique: for to morow night we would haue it at the ladie *Heroes* chamber window.

Balth. The best I can my lord.

Exit Balthasar.

Prince. Do so, farewell. Come hither *Leonato*, what was it you told mee of to day, that your niece *Beatrice* was in loue with signior *Benedicke*?

Gla. O I, stalke on, stalk on, the foule fits. I did neuer think that lady would haue loued any man.

Leo. No nor I neither, but most wonderful, that she should so dote on signior *Benedicke*, whome she hath in all outward behauiours seemd euer to abhorre.

Bene. Ist possible? fits the wind in that corner?

Leo. By my troth my lord, I cannot tell what to thinke of it, but that she loues him with an inraged affection, it is past the infinite of thought.

Prince. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Glaud. Faith like enough.

Leon.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Leon. O God ! counterfeit ? there was neuer counterfeit of passion, came so neare the life of passion as she discouers it.

Prince. Why what effects of passion shewes she ?

Claud. Baite the hooke wel, this fish will bite.

Leon. What effects my lord ? she wil sit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did indeede.

Prince. How, how I pray you ! you amaze me, I would haue thought her spirite had beene inuincible against all assaults of affection.

Leo. I would haue sworn it had, my lord, especially against *Benedicke*.

Bene. I should think this a gull, but that the white bearded fellow speakes it : knauery cannot fure hide himself in such reuerence.

Claud. He hath tane th' infection, hold it vp.

Prince. Hath shee made her affection knowne to *Benedicke* ?

Leonato. No, and sweares shee neuer will, thats her torment.

Claudio. Tis true indeed, so your daughter saies : shall I, saies she, that haue so oft encountred him with scorne, write to him that I loue him ?

Leo. This saies she now when she is beginning to write to him, for sheel be vp twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smocke, til she haue writ a sheete of paper : my daughter tels vs all.

Clau. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a prety iest your daughter told of vs.

Leonato. O when she had writ it, and was reading it ouer, she found *Benedicke* and *Beatrice* betweene the sheete.

Claudio. That.

Leon. O she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, raild at her self, that she should be so immodest to write, to one that she knew would flout her, I measure him, saies she, by my
OWN

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

own spirit, for I should flout him, if he writ to me, yea thogh I loue him I should.

Clau. Then downe vpon her knees she falls, weepes, sobs, beates her heart, teares her haire, prayes, curses, O sweet *Benedicke*, God giue me patience.

Leonato. She doth indeed, my daughter saies so, and the extasie hath so much ouerborne her, that my daughter is sometime afeard shee will doe a desperate out-rage to her selfe, it is very true.

Prince. It were good that *Benedicke* knew of it by some other, if she will not discouer it.

Claudio. To what end: he would make but a sport of it, and torment the poore lady worse.

Prince. And he should, it were an almes to hang him, shees an excellent sweete lady, and (out of all suspition,) she is vertuous.

Claudio. And she is exceeding wise.

Prince. In euery thing but in louing *Benedicke*.

Leonato. O my lord, wisedome and blood combating in so tender a body, we haue ten proofes to one, that bloud hath the victory, I am sory for her, as I haue iust cause, beeing her vncle, and her gardian.

Prince. I would shee had bestowed this dotage on mee, I would haue daft all other respects, and made her halfe my self: I pray you tell *Benedicke* of it, and heare what a will say.

Leonato. Were it good thinke you?

Claudio. *Hero* thinkes surely she will die, for she sayes shee will die, if he loue her not, and shee will die ere shee make her loue knowne, and she will die if he wooe her, rather than shee will bate one breath of her accustomed crosnesse.

Prince. She doth well, if shee shoulde make tender of her loue, tis very possible heele scorne it, for the man (as you know all) hath a contemptible spirite.

Claudio. He is a very proper man.

Prince.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Prince. He hath indeede a good outward happines.

Claudio. Before God, and in my mind, very wise.

Prince. Hee dooth indeede shew some sparkes that are like wit.

Claudio. And I take him to be valiant.

Prince. As *Heñor*, I assure you, and in the manning of quarrels you may say he is wise, for either hee auoydes them with great discretion, or vndertakes them with a most christi-anlike feare.

Leonato. If he do feare God, a must necessarily keep peace, if hee breake the peace, hee ought to enter into a quarrel with feare and trembling.

Prince. And so will hee doe, for the man doth feare God, howsoeuer it seemes not in him, by some large iestes hee will make : well I am fory for your niece, shall we go seeke *Benedicke*, and tell him of her loue ?

Claudio. Neuer tell him, my lord, let her weare it out with good counsell.

Leonato. Nay thats impossible, shee may weare her heart out first.

Prince. Well, we will heare further of it by your daughter, let it coole the while, I loue *Benedicke* wel, and I could wish he would modestly examine himselfe, to see how much he is vnworthy so good a lady.

Leonato. My lord, will you walke ? dinner is ready.

Claudio. If he do not doate on her vppon this, I will neuer trust my expectation.

Prince. Let there be the same nette spread for her, and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry : the sporte will be, when they holde one an opinion of an others dotage, and no such matter, thats the scene that I woulde see, which wil be meere a dumbe shew : let vs send her to call him in to dinner.

Benedicke. This can be no tricke, the conference was sadly borne

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

borne, they haue the trueth of this from *Hero*, they seeme to pittie the lady: it seemes her affections haue their full bent: loue me? why it must be requited: I heare how I am censurde, they say I will beare my selfe prowdly, if I perceiue the loue come from her: they say too that she will rather die than giue anie signe of affection: I did neuer thinke to marry, I must not seeme prowd, happy are they that heare their detractions, and can put them to mending: they say the lady is faire, tis a trueth, I can beare them witnesse: and vertuous, tis so, I cannot reprocue it, and wise, but for louing me, by my troth it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her follie, for I will be horribly in loue with her, I may chaunce haue some odde quirkes and remnants of witte broken on me, because I haue railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loues the meate in his youth, that he cannot indure in his age. Shall quippes and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the carriere of his humor? No, the world must be peopled. When I saide I woulde die a batcheller, I did not think I should liue til I were married, here comes *Beatrice*: by this day, shees a faire lady, I doe spie some markes of loue in her.

Enter Beatrice.

Beatr. Aganst my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Faire *Beatrice*, I thanke you for your paines.

Beat. I tooke no more paines for those thankes, then you take paines to thanke me, if it had bin painful I would not haue come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message.

Beat. Yea iust so much as you may take vpon a kniues point, and choake a daw withall: you haue no stomach signior, fare you well.

Exit.

Bene. Ha, against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner: theres a double meaning in that: I took no more paines for

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

for those thanks thē you took pains to thank me, thats as much as to say, any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks : if I do not take pittie of her I am a villaine, if I do not loue her I am a *Iew*, I will go get her picture. *Exit.*

Enter Hero and two gentlewomen, Margaret, and Ursley.

Hero. Good *Margaret* runne thee to the parlour,
There shalt thou find my cosin *Beatrice*,
Proposing with the prince and *Claudio*,
Whisper her eare and tell her I and *Vrsley*,
Walke in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her, say that thou ouer-heardst vs,
And bid her steale into the pleached bowere
Where hony-suckles ripened by the sunne,
Forbid the sunne to enter : like fauourites,
Made proud by princes, that aduaunce their pride,
Against that power that bred it, there will she hide her,
To listen our propose, this is thy office,
Beare thee well in it, and leaue vs alone.

Marg. Ile make her come I warrant you presently.

Hero. Now *Vrsula*, when *Beatrice* doth come,
As we do trace this alley vp and downe,
Our talke must onely be of *Benedicke*,
When I do name him let it be thy part,
To praise him more than euer man did merite,
My talke to thee must be how *Benedicke*,
Is sicke in loue with *Beatrice* : of this matter,
Is little *Cupids* crafty arrow made,
That onely wounds by heare-say : now begin,
For looke where *Beatrice* like a lapwing runs
Close by the ground, to heare our conference.

Enter Beatrice.

Ursula. The pleasantst angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden ores the siluer streame,

And

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

And greedily deuoure the treacherous baite :
So angle we for *Beatrice*, who euen now,
Is couched in the wood-bine couerture,
Feare you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we neare her that her eare loose nothing,
Of the false sweete baite that we lay for it :
No truly *Vrsula*, she is too disdainfull,
I know her spirits are as coy and wild,
As haggerds of the rocke.

Vrsula. But are you sure,
That *Benedicke* loues *Beatrice* so intirely ?

Hero. So saies the prince, and my new trothed lord.

Vrsula. And did they bid you tel her of it, madame ?

Hero. They did intreate me to acquaint her of it,
But I perswaded them, if they lou'de *Benedicke*,
To wish him wrastle with affection,
And neuer to let *Beatrice* know of it.

Vrsula. Why did you so, dooth not the gentleman
Deserue as full as fortunate a bed,
As euer *Beatrice* shall couch vpon ?

Hero. O God of loue ! I know he doth deserue,
As much as may be yeelded to a man :
But nature neuer framde a womans hart,
Of powder stufte then that of *Beatrice* :
Disdaine and scorne ride sparkling in her eies,
Misprising what they looke on, and her wit
Valewes itselfe so highly, that to her
All matter els seemes weake : she cannot loue,
Nor take no shape nor proiect of affection,
She is so selfe indeared.

Vrsula. Sure I thinke so,
And therefore certainly it were not good,
She knew his loue lest sheele make sport at it.

Hero. Why you speake truth, I neuer yet saw man,

How

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

How wise, how noble, yong, how rarely featured.
But she would spel him backward : if faire faced,
She would sweare the gentleman should be her sister :
If blacke, why nature drawing of an antique,
Made a foule blot : if tall, a launce ill headed :
If low, an agot very vildly cut :
If speaking, why a vane blowne with all winds :
If silent, why a blocke moued with none :
So turnes she euey man the wrong side out,
And neuer giues to truth and vertue, that
Which simplenesse and merite purchaseth.

Vrsula. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

Hero. No not to be so odde, and from all fashions,
As *Beatrice* is, cannot be commendable,
But who dare tell her so ? If I should speake,
She would mocke me into ayre, O she would laugh me
Out of my selfe, presse me to death with wit,
Therefore let *Benedicke* like couerd fire,
Consume away in fighes, waste inwardly :
It were a better death, then die with mockes,
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

Vrsula. Yet tel her of it, heare what she wil say.

Hero. No rather I will go to *Benedicke*,
And counsaile him to fight against his passion,
And truly Ile deuise some honest slaunders,
To staine my cosin with, one doth not know,
How much an ill word may impoison liking.

Vrsula. O do not do your cosin such a wrong,
She cannot be so much without true iudgement,
Hauing so swift and excellent a wit,
As she is priske to haue, as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as signior *Benedicke*.

Hero. He is the onely man of *Italy*,
Alwaies excepted my deare *Claudio*,

Vrsula.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Vrfula. I pray you be not angry with me, madame,
Speaking my fancy : signior *Benedicke*,
For shape, for bearing argument and valour,
Goes formost in report through *Italy*.

Hero. Indeed he hath an excellent good name.

Vrfula. His excellence did earne it, ere he had it ;
When are you married madame ?

Hero. Why euery day to morrow, come go in,
Ile shew thee some attyres, and haue thy counsaile,
Which is the best to furnish me to morrow.

Vrfula. Shees limed I warrant you,
We haue caught her madame.

Hero. If it proue so, then louing goes by haps,
Some *Cupid* kills with arrowes some with traps.

Beat. What fire is in mine eares ? can this be true ?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorne so much ?
Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adew,
No glory liues behind the backe of such.
And *Benedicke*, loue on I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy louing hand :
If thou dost loue, my kindnesse shall incite thee
To bind our loues vp in a holy band.
For others say thou dost deserue, and I
Beleeue it better then reportingly.

Exit.

Enter Prince, Claudio, Benedicke, and Leonato.

Prince. I doe but stay til your mariage be consummate, and
then go I toward *Arragon*.

Claud. Ile bring you thither my lord, if youle vouchsafe
me.

Prince. Nay that would be as great a foyle in the new glosse
of your marriage, as to shew a child his new coate and forbid
him to weare it, I wil only be bold with *Benedick* for his com-
pany, for from the crowne of his head, to the sole of his foot,

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

he is al mirth, he hath twice or thrice cut *Cupides* bow-string, and the little hang-man dare not shoot at him, he hath a heart as found as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinkes, his tongue speakes.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I haue bin.

Leo. So say I, me thinkes you are fadder.

Clau. I hope he be in loue.

Prince. Hang him truant, theres no true drop of bloud in him to be truly toucht with loue, if he be fadde, he wantes money.

Bene. I haue the tooth-ach.

Prince. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it.

Clau. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

Prince. What ? sigh for the tooth-ach.

Leon. Where is but a humour or a worme.

Bene. Wel, euery one cannot master a grieve, but he that has it.

Clau. Yet say I, he is in loue.

Prince. There is no appeerance of fancie in him, vnlesse it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises, as to be a *Dutch-man* to day, a *French-man* to morrow, or in the shape of two countries at once, as a *Germaine* from the waste downward, all ftops, and a *Spaniard* from the hip vpward, no dublet : vnlesse he haue a fancie to this foolery, as it appeares he hath, he is no foole for fancy, as you would haue it appeare he is.

Claud. If he be not in loue with some woman, there is no beleeuing old signes, a brushes his hat a mornings, what should that bode ?

Prince. Hath any man seene him at the barbers ?

Claud. No, but the barbers man hath bin seene with him, and the olde ornament of his checke hath already stufft tennis balls.

Leon. Indeed he lookes yonger than he did, by the losse of a beard.

Prince.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Prince. Nay a rubs himfelfe with ciuit, can you fmell him out by that ?

Claud. Thats as much as to fay, the fweete youthe's in loue.

Bene. The greateft note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he woont to wafh his face ?

Prince. Yea or to paint himfelfe ? for the which I heare what they fay of him.

Claud. Nay but his iefling fpirit, which is now crept into a lute-string, and now gouern'd by ftops.

Prince. Indeed that tells a heauy tale for him : conclude, conclude, he is in loue.

Claud. Nay but I know who loues him.

Prince. That would I know too, I warrant one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions, and in difpight of al, dies for him.

Prince. She fhall be buried with her face vpwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charme for the tooth-ake, old fignior, walke afide with me, I haue ftudied eight or nine wife wordes to fpeake to you, which thefe hobby-horfes muft not heare.

Prince. For my life to breake with him about *Beatrice*.

Claud. Tis euen fo, *Hero* and *Margaret* haue by this played their parts with *Beatrice*, and then the two beares will not bite one another when they meete.

Enter Iohn the baftard.

Baftard. My lord and brother, God faue you.

Prince. Good den brother.

Baftard. If your leifure feru'd, I would fpeake with you.

Prince. In priuate ?

Baftard. If it please you, yet count *Claudio* may heare, for what I would fpeake of, concernes him.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Prince. Whats the matter ?

Bast. Meanes your lordship to be married to morrow ?

Prince. You know he does.

Bast. I know not that when he knowes what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

Bast. You may think I loue you not, let that appeare hereafter, and ayme better at me by that I now will manifest, for my brother (I thinke, he holdes you well, and in dearenesse of heart) hath holpe to effect your ensuing mariage : surely fute ill spent, and labor ill bestowed.

Prince. Why whats the matter ?

Bast. I came hither to tel you, and circumstances shortned, (for she has bin too long a talking of) the lady is disloyall.

Claud. Who *Hero* ?

Bastar. Euen she, *Leonatoes Hero*, your *Hero*, euery mans *Hero*.

Clau. Disloyall ?

Bast. The word is too good to paint out her wickednesse, I could say she were worfe, thinke you of a worfe title, and I wil fit her to it : wonder not till further warrant : go but with me to night you shall see her chamber window entred, euen the night before her wedding day, if you loue her, then to morow wed her : but it would better fitte your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so ?

Prince. I wil not thinke it.

Bast. If you dare not trust that you see, confesse not that you knowe : if you will follow mee, I will shew you enough, and when you haue scene more, and heard more, proceede accordingly.

Claudio. If I see anie thing to night, why I should not marry her to morrow in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

Prince.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Prince. And as I wooed for thee to obtaine her, I wil ioyne with thee, to disgrace her.

Bastard. I will disparage her no farther, till you are my witnesses, beare it coldely but till midnight, and let the issue shew it selfe.

Prince. O day vntowardly turned !

Claud. O mischiefe strangely thwarting !

Bastard. O plague right well preuented ! so will you say, when you haue seene the sequele.

Enter Dogbery and his compartner with the watch.

Dog. Are you good men and true ?

Uerges. Yea, or else it were pittie but they should suffer saluation body and soule.

Dog. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should haue any allegiance in them, being chosen for the princes watch.

Uerges. Well, giue them their charge, neighbour *Dogbery.*

Dogbery. First, who thinke you the most defartlesse man to be constable ?

Watch 1. *Hugh Ote-cake*, fir or *George Sea-cole*, for they can write and reade.

Dogbery. Come hither neighbor *Sea-cole*, God hath blest you with a good name : to be a welfauoured man, is the gift of fortune, but to write and reade, comes by nature.

Watch 2. Both which maister constable.

Dogbery. You haue : I knew it would be your answer : wel, for your fauour fir, why giue God thanks, and make no boast of it, and for your writing and reading, let that appeere when there is no neede of such vanity, you are thought heere to be the most senslesse and fit man for the constable of the watch : therefore beare you the lanthorne : this is your charge, you

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

shall comprehend all vagrom men, you are to bidde any man stand, in the princes name.

Watch 2. How if a will not stand ?

Dogbery. Why then take no note of him, but let him goe, and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thanke God you are ridde of a knaue.

Verges. If he wil not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the princes subiects.

Dogbery. True, and they are to meddle with none but the princes subiects : you shall also make no noise in the streetes : for, for the watch to babble and to talke, is most tollerable, and and not to be indured.

Watch. We will rather sleepe than talke, we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogbery. Why you speake like an antient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend : onely haue a care that your billes bee not stoine : well, you are to cal at al the alehouses, and bid those that are drunke get them to bed.

Watch. How if they will not ?

Dogbery. Why then let them alone til they are sober, if they make you not then the better answer, you may say, they are not the men you tooke them for.

Watch. Well sir.

Dogbery. If you meete a thiefe, you may suspect him, by vertue of your office, to be no true man : and for such kind of men, the lesse you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your honesty.

Watch. If we know him to be a thiefe, shal we not lay hands on him ?

Dogbery. Truely by your office you may, but I thinke they that touch pitch will be defilde : the most peaceable way for you, if you doe take a thiefe, is, to let him shew himselfe what he is, and steale out of your companie.

Verges.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Verges. You haue beene alwayes called a mercifull manne, partner.

Dog. Truly I would not hang a dogge by my will, much more a man who hath anie honestie in him.

Verges. If you heare a child crie in the night you must call to the nurse and bid her stil it.

Watch. How if the nurse be asleepe and will not heare vs.

Dog. Why then depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying, for the ewe that will not heare her lamb when it baes, will neuer answer a calfe when he bleates.

Verges. Tis very true.

Dog. This is the end of the charge : you constable are to present the princes owne person, if you meete the prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verges. Nay birlady that I thinke a cannot.

Dog. Fiue shillings to one on't with any man that knowes the statutes, he may stay him, mary not without the prince be willing, for indeed the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verges. Birlady I thinke it be so.

Dog. Ha ah ha, wel masters good night, and there be any matter of weight chaunces, cal vp me, keepe your fellowes counsailes, and your owne, and good night, come neighbour.

Watch. Well masters, we heare our charge, let vs goe sitte here vppon the church bench till twoo, and then all to bed.

Dog. One word more, honest neighbors, I pray you watch about signior *Leonatoes* doore, for the wedding being there to morrow, there is a great coyle to night, adiew, be vigilant I beseech you.

Exeunt.

Enter Borachio and Conrade.

Bor. What *Conrade* ?

Watch. Peace, stir not.

Bor. *Conrade* I say.

Con. Here man, I am thy elbow.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Bor. Mas and my elbow itcht, I thought there would a scabbe follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that, and now forward with thy tale.

Bor. Stand thee close then vnder this penthouse, for it driffells raine, and I will, like a true drunckard, vtter all to thee.

Watch. Some treason masters, yet stand close.

Bor. Therefore know, I haue earned of dun *John* a thousand ducates.

Con. Is it possible that any villanie should be so deare ?

Bor. Thou shouldst rather aske if it were possible any villanie shuld be so rich ? for when rich villains haue need of poor ones, poore ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bor. That shewes thou art vnconfirm'd, thou knowest that the fashion of a dublet, or a hat, or a cloake, is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes it is apparell.

Bor. I meane the fashion.

Con. Yes the fashion is the fashion.

Bor. Tush, I may as well say the foole's the foole, but seeest thou not what a deformed theefe this fashion is ?

Watch. I know that deformed, a has bin a vile theefe, this vij. ycere, a goes vp and downe like a gentle man : I remember his name.

Bor. Didst thou not heare some body ?

Con. No, twas the vane on the house.

Bor. Seest thou not (I say) what a deformed thiefe this fashion is, how giddily a turnes about all the hot-blounds, between fourteene and fife and thirtie, sometimes fashioning them like *Pharaoes* souldiours in the rechie painting, sometime like god *Bels* priests in the old church window, sometime like the shauen *Hercules* in the smircht worm-eaten tapestry, where his cod-peece seemes as massie as his club.

Con. Al this I see, and I see that the fashion weares out more apparrell then the man, but art not thou thy selfe giddy with
the

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion ?

Bor. Not so neither, but know that I haue to night wooed *Margaret* the lady *Heroes* gentle-woman, by the name of *Hero*, she leanes me out at her mistris chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night : I tell this tale vildly, I should first tel thee how the prince *Claudio*, and my master planted, and placed, and possessed, by my master don *Iohn*, saw a farre off in the orchard this amiable incounter.

Con. And thought they *Margaret* was *Hero* ?

Bar. Two of them did, the prince and *Claudio*, but the diuel my master knew she was *Margaret*, and partly by his oths, which first possesse them, partly by the darke night which did deceiue them, but chiefly, by my villany, which did confirme any slander that don *Iohn* had made, away went *Claudio* enragde, swore he would meet her as he was apointed next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation shame her, with what he saw o're night, and send her home againe without a husband.

Watch 1. We charge you in the princes name stand.

Watch 2. Call vppe the right maister constable, wee haue here recouerd the most dangerous peece of lechery, that euer was knowne in the common wealth.

Watch 1. And one deformed is one of them, I know him, a weares a locke.

Conr. Masters, masters.

Watch 2. Youle be made bring deformed forth I warrant you.

Conr. Masters, neuer speake, we charge you, let vs obey you to go with vs.

Bor. We are like to proue a goodly commoditie, being taken vp of these mens billes.

Conr. A commodity in question I warrant you, come weele obey you.

Exeunt.

Enter

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.]

Enter Hero, and Margarèt, and Vrfula.

Hero. Good *Vrfula* wake my cosin *Beatrice*, and desire her to rise.

Urfula. I wil lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Urfula. Well.

Marg. Troth I thinke your other rebato were better.

Hero. No pray thee good *Meg*, ile weare this.

Marg. By my troth's not so good, and I warrant your cosin will say so.

Hero. My cosin's a foole, and thou art another, Ile weare none but this.

Mar. I like the new tire within excellently, if the haire were a thought browner : and your gown's a most rare fashion yfaith, I saw the dutchesse of *Millaines* gowne that they praise so.

Hero. O that exceeds they say.

Marg. By my troth's but a night-gown it respect of yours, cloth a gold and cuts, and lac'd with siluer, set with pearles, downe sleeues, side sleeues, and skirts, round vnderborne with a blewish tinsell, but for a fine queint graceful and excelent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero. God giue me ioy to weare it, for my heart is exceeding heauy.

Marg. T'will be heauier soone by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie vpon thee, art not ashamed ?

Marg. Of what lady ? of speaking honourably ? is not marriage honourable in a beggar ? is not your lord honourable without mariage ? I thinke you would haue me say, sauing your reuerence a husband : and bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, Ile offend no body, is there any harm in the heauier, for a husband ? none I thinke, and it be the right husband, and
the

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

the right wife, otherwise tis light and not heauy, aske my lady
Beatrice els, here she comes.

Enter Beatrice.

Hero. Good morrow coze.

Beat. Good morrow sweete *Hero*.

Hero. Why how now? do you speake in the sicke tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, me thinkes.

Mar. Clap's into light a loue, (that goes without a burden,) do you sing it, and ile daunce it.

Beat. Ye light aloue with your heeles, then if your husband haue stables enough youle see he shall lacke no barnes.

Mar. O illegitimate construction! I scorne that with my heeles.

Beat. Tis almost fiue a clocke cosin, tis time you were ready, by my troth I am exceeding ill, hey ho.

Mar. For a hauke, a horse, or a husband?

Beat. For the letter that begins them al, H.

Mar. Wel, and you be not turnde *Turke*, theres no more sayling by the starre.

Beat. What meanes the foole trow?

Mar. Nothing I, but God send euery one their hearts desire.

Hero. These gloues the counte sent me, they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stuft cosin, I cannot smell.

Mar. A maide and stuft! theres goodly catching of colde.

Beat. O God help me, God help me, how long haue you profest apprehension?

Mar. Euer since you left it, doth not my wit become me rarely?

Beat. It is not seene enough, you should weare it in your cap, by my troth I am sicke.

Mar.

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Mar. Get you some of this distill'd *carduus benedictus*, and lay to your heart, it is the onely thing for a qualme.

Hero. There thou prickst her with a thissel.

Beat. *Benedictus*, why *benedictus*? you haue some morall in this *benedictus*.

Mar. Morall? no by my troth I haue no morall meaning, I meant plaine holy thissel, you may thinke perchaunce that I think you are in loue, nay birlady I am not such a foole to think what I list, nor I list not to thinke what I can, nor indeed I can not think, if I would thinke my heart out of thinking, that you are in loue, or that you will be in loue, or that you can be in loue: yet *Benedicke* was such another, and now is he become a man, he swore he would neuer marry, and yet now in dispiight of his heart he eates his meate without grudging, and how you may be conuerted I know not, but me thinks you looke with your eies as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keepes?

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Enter Vrsula.

Ursula. Madame withdraw, the prince, the count, signior *Benedicke*, don *Iohn*, and all the gallants of the towne are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dresse me good coze, good *Meg*, good *Vrsula*.

Enter Leonato, and the Constable, and the Headborough.

Leonato. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Const. Dog. Mary sir I would haue some confidence with you, that decernes you nearely.

Leonato. Briefe I pray you, for you see it is a busie time with me.

Const.

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Const. Dog. Mary this it is fir.

Headb. Yes in truth it is fir.

Leonato. What is it my good friends?

Con. Do. Goodman *Verges* fir speaks a little of the matter, an old man fir, and his wittes are not so blunt, as God helpe I would desire they were, but infaith honest, as the skin between his browes.

Head. Yes I thank God, I am as honest as any man liuing, that is an old man, and no honefter then I.

Const. Dog. Comparisons are odorous, palabras, neighbour *Verges*.

Leonato. Neighbors, you are tedious.

Const. Dog. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poore dukes officers, but truly for mine owne part, if I were as tedious as a king I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

Leonato. Al thy tediousnesse on me, ah?

Const. Dog. Yea, and't twere a thousand pound more than tis, for I heare as good exclamation on your worshippe as of any man in the cittie, and though I be but a poore man, I am glad to heare it.

Head. And so am I.

Leonato. I would faine know what you haue to say.

Head. Mary fir our watch to night, excepting your worships preface, ha tane a couple of as arrant knaues as any in *Messina*.

Const. Dog. A good old man fir, he will be talking as they say, when the age is in, the wit is out, God help vs, it is a world to see: well said yfaith neighbour *Verges*, well, Gods a good man, and two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind, an honest soule yfaith fir, by my troth he is, as euer broke bread, but God is to be worshipt, all men are not alike, alas good neigh bour.

Leonato.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Leonato. Indeed neighbour he comes too short of you.

Const. Do. Gifts that God giues.

Leonato. I must leaue you.

Const. Dog. One word sir, our watch sir haue indeede comprehended two aspitious persons, and wee woulde haue them this morning examined before your worship.

Leonato. Take their examination your selfe, and bring it me, I am now in great haste, as it may appeare vnto you.

Constable. It shall be suffigance. (Exit.

Leonato. Drinke some wine ere you goe : fare you well.

Messenger. My lord, they stay for you, to giue your daughter to her husband.

Leon. Ile wait vpon them, I am ready.

Dogb. Go good partner, goe get you to *Francis Sea-cole*, bid him bring his penne and inckehorne to the gaole : we are now to examination these men.

Verges. And we must do it wisely.

Dogbery. We will spare for no witte I warrant you : heeres that shall driue some of them to a noncome, only get the learned writer to set downe our excommunication, and meet me at the iaile.

Enter Prince, Bastard, Leonato, Frier, Claudio, Benedicke, Hero, and Beatrice.

Leonato. Come frier *Francis*, be briefe, onely to the plaine forme of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Fran. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady.

Claudio. No.

Leo. To bee married to her : frier, you come to marry her.

Frier. Lady, you come hither to be married to this counte.

Hero. I do.

Frier. If either of you know any inward impediment why
you

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you should not be conioyned, I charge you on your foules to vtter it.

Claudio. Know you any, *Hero* ?

Hero. None my lord.

Frier. Know you any, counte ?

Leonato. I dare make his answer, none.

Clau. O what men dare do ! what men may do ! what men daily do, not knowing what they do !

Bene. Howe nowe ! interiections ? why then, some be of laughing, as, ah ha, he.

Claudio. Stand thee by frier, father, by your leaue,
Will you with free and vnconstrained soule
Giue me this maide your daughter ?

Leonata. As freely sonne as God did giue her mee.

Claudio. And what haue I to giue you backe whose woorth
May counterpoise this rich and pretious gift ?

Prince. Nothing, vnlesse you render her againe.

Claudio. Sweete prince, you learne me noble thankfulnes :
There *Leonato*, take her backe againe,
Giue not this rotten orange to your friend,
Shee's but the signe and semblance of her honor :
Behold how like a maide she blushes heere !
O what authoritie and shew of truth
Can cunning sinne couer it selfe withall !
Comes not that blood, as modest euidence,
To witnesse simple vertue ? would you not sweare
All you that see her, that she were a maide,
By these exterior shewes ? but she is none :
She knowes the heate of a luxurious bed :
Her blush is guiltinesse, not modestie.

Leonato. What do you meane, my lord ?

Claudio. Not to be married,
Not to knit my soule to an approoued wanton.

Leonato. Deere my lord, if you in your owne prooffe,

Have

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Haue vanquisht the resistance of her youth,
And made defeate of her virginie.

Claudio. I know what you would say: if I haue knowne her,
You will say, she did imbrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the forehand sinne: no *Leonato*,
I neuer tempted her with word too large,
But as a brother to his sister, shewed
Bashfull sinceritie, and comelie loue.

Hero. And seemde I euer otherwise to you?

Claudio. Out on thee seeming, I wil write against it,
You seeme to me as *Diane* in her orbe,
As chaste as is the budde ere it be blowne:
But you are more intemperate in your blood,
Than *Venus*, or those pampred animalls,
That rage in sauage sensualitie.

Hero. Is my lord well that he doth speake so wide?

Leonato. Sweete prince, why speake not you?

Prince. What should I speake?

I stand dishonourd that haue gone about,
To lincke my deare friend to a common stale.

Leonato. Are these things spoken, or do I but dreame?

Bastard. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

Bened. This lookes not like a nuptiall.

Hero. True, O God!

Claud. *Leonato*, stand I here?

Is this the prince? is this the princes brother?

Is this face *Heroes*? are our eies our owne?

Leonato. All this is so, but what of this my lord?

Claud. Let me but moue one question to your daughter,
And by that fatherly and kindly power,
That you haue in her, bid her answer truly.

Leonato. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

Hero. O God defend me how am I beset,
What kind of catechising call you this?

Claud.

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Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.

Hero. Is it not *Hero*, who can blot that name
With any iust reproch?

Claud. Mary that can *Hero*,

Hero it selfe can blot out *Heroes* vertue.

What man was he talkt with you yesternight,
Out at your window betwixt twelue and one?
Now if you are a maide, answer to this.

Hero. I talkt with no man at that hower my lord.

Prince. Why then are you no maiden. *Leonato*,
I am fory you must heare: vpon mine honor,
My selfe, my brother, and this grieued counte
Did see her, heare her, at that howre last night,
Talke with a ruffian at her chamber window,
Who hath indeede most like a liberall villaine,
Confest the vile encounters they haue had
A thousand times in secret.

John. Fie, fie, they are not to be named my lord,
Not to be spoke of,
There is not chastitie enough in language,
Without offence to vtter them: thus pretty lady,
I am fory for thy much misgouernement.

Claud. O *Hero*! what a *Hero* hadst thou bin,
If halfe thy outward graces had bin placed,
About thy thoughts and counsailes of thy heart?
But fare thee well, most foule, most faire, farewell
Thou pure impietie, and impious puritie,
For thee Ile locke vp all the gates of loue.
And on my eie-liddes shall coniecture hang,
To turne all beautie into thoughts of harme,
And neuer shall it more be gracious.

Leonato. Hath no mans dagger here a point for me.

Beatrice. Why how now cosin, wherfore sinke you down?

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Bastard. Come let vs go : these things come thus to light,
Smother her spirits vp.

Benedicke. How doth the lady ?

Beatrice. Dead I thinke, helpe vncke,

Hero, why *Hero*, vncke, signior *Benedicke*, frier.

Leonato. O fate! take not away thy heauy hand,
Death is the fairest couer for her shame
That may be wisht for.

Beatrice. How now cosin *Hero*.

Frier. Haue comfort lady.

Leonato. Dost thou looke vp ?

Frier. Yea, wherefore should she not ?

Leonato. Wherefore ? why doth not euery earthly thing,
Cry shame vpon her ? could she here deny
The story that is printed in her bloud ?
Do not liue *Hero*, do not ope thine eies :
For did I thinke thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirites were stronger than thy shames,
My selfe would on the rereward of reproches
Strike at thy life. Griued I I had but one ?
Chid I for that at frugall natures frame ?
O one too much by thee : why had I one ?
Why euer wast thou louely in my eies ?
Why had I not with charitable hand,
Tooke vp a beggars issue at my gates,
Who smirched thus, and mired with infamy,
I might haue said, no part of it is mine,
This shame deriues it selfe from vnknowne loynes,
But mine and mine I loued, and mine I praisde,
And mine that I was prowd on mine so much,
That I my selfe, was to my selfe not mine :
Valewing of her, why she, O she is falne,
Into a pit of incke, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her cleane againe,

And

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

And salt too little, which may season giue
To her foule tainted flesh.

Ben. Sir, sir, be patient, for my part I am so attired in
wonder, I know not what to say.

Beat. O on my foule my cosin is belied.

Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

Beat. No truly, not although vntill last night,
I haue this tweluemonth bin her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirmd, confirmd, O that is stronger made,
Which was before bard vp with ribs of yron,
Would the two princes lie, and *Glaudio* lie,
Who loued her so, that speaking of her fouleneffe,
Washt it with teares! hence from her, let her die.

Frier. Heare me a little, for I haue only bin silent so long,
and giuen way vnto this course of fortune, by noting of the
lady, I haue markt,

A thousand blushing apparitions,
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames,
In angel whitenesse beate away those blushes,
And in her eie there hath appeard a fire,
To burne the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth: call me a foole,
Trust not my reading, nor my obseruations,
Which with experimental seale doth warrant
The tenure of my booke: trust not my age,
My reuerence, calling, nor diuinitie,
If this sweete ladie lie not guiltlesse here,
Vnder some biting errour.

Leonato. Frier, it cannot be,
Thou seest that al the grace that she hath left,
Is, that she will not adde to her damnation,
A sinne of periury, she not denies it:
Why seekst thou then to couer with excuse,
That which appears in proper nakednesse?

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Frier. Lady what man is he you are accusde of?

Hero. They know that do accuse me, I know none,
If I know more of any man aliue
Then that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sinnes lacke mercie, O my father,
Proue you that any man with me conuerst,
At houres vnmeete, or that I yesternight
Maintaind the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

Frier. There is some strange misprision in the princes.

Bene. Two of them haue the very bent of honour,
And if their wisdomes be misled in this,
The practise of it liues in *Iohn* the bastard,
Whose spirites toyle in frame of villanies.

Leonato. I know not, if they speake but truth of her,
These hands shall teare her, if they wrong her honour,
The prowdest of them shal wel heare of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this bloud of mine,
Nor age so eate vp my inuention,
Nor fortune made such hauocke of my meanes,
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
But they shall find awakte in such a kind,
Both strength of limbe, and policy of mind,
Ability in meanes, and choise of friends,
To quit me of them thoroughly.

Frier. Pawse awhile,
And let my counsell sway you in this case,
Your daughter here the princeesse (left for dead,)
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it, that she is dead indeede,
Maintaine a mourning ostentation,
And on your families old monument,
Hang mourneful epitaphes, and do all rites,
That appertaine vnto a buriall.

Leon.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Leon. What shall become of this? what will this do?

Frier. Mary this well caried, shall on her behalfe,
Change flaunder to remorse, that is some good,
But not for that dreame I on this strange course,
But on this trauaile looke for greater birth:
She dying, as it must be so maintaind,
Vpon the instant that she was accusde,
Shal be lamented, pittied, and excusde
Of euery hearer: for it so falls out,
That what we haue, we prize not to the worth,
Whiles we enioy it, but being lackt and lost,
Why then we racke the vaw, then we find
The vertue that possession would not shew vs
Whiles it was ours, so will it fare with *Claudio*:
When hee shall heare she died vpon his words,
Th idæa of her life shall sweetly creepe,
Into his study of imagination,
And euery louely organ of her life,
Shall come appareld in more precious habite,
More moouing delicate, and full of life,
Into the eie and prospect of his soule
Then when she liude indeed: then shall he mourne,
If euer loue had interest in his liuer,
And wish he had not so accused her:
No, though he thought his accusation true:
Let this be so, and doubt not but succeffe
Will fashion the euent in better shape,
Then I can lay it downe in likelihood.
But if all ayme but this be leuelld false,
The supposition of the ladies death,
Will quench the wonder of her infamie.
And if it fort not wel, you may conceale her,
As best befits her wounded reputation,

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

In some reclusiue and religious life,
Out of all eies, tongues, minds, and iniuries.

Bene. Signior *Leonato*, let the frier aduise you,
And though you know my inwardnesse and loue
Is very much vnto the prince and *Claudio*,
Yet, by mine honor, I will deale in this,
As secretly and iustly as your soule
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in griefe,
The smallest twine may leade me.

Frier. Tis wel consented, presently away,
For to strange fores, strangely they straine the cure,
Come lady, die to liue, this wedding day
Perhaps is but prolong'd, haue patience and endure. *Exit.*

Bene. Lady *Beatrice*, haue you wept al this while ?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You haue no reason, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do beleue your faire cosin is wronged.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserue of me that
would right her !

Bene. Is there any way to shew such friendship ?

Beat. A very euen way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it ?

Beat. It is a mans office, but not yours.

Bene. I doe loue nothing in the worlde so well as you, is not
that strange ?

Beat. As strange as the thing I knowe not, it were as possible for me to say, I loued nothing so wel as you, but beleue me not, and yet I lie not, I confesse nothing, nor I deny nothing, I am sory for my coosin.

Bened. By my sword *Beatrice*, thou louest me.

Beat. Do not sweare and eate it.

Bened.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Bened. I will sweare by it that you loue me, and I wil make him eate it that fayer I loue not you.

Beat. Will you not eate your word ?

Bened. With no sawce that can be deuised to it, I protest I loue thee.

Beat. Why then God forgiue me.

Bened. What offence sweete *Beatrice* ?

Beat. You haue stayed me in a happy houre, I was about to protest I loued you.

Bened. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I loue you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

Bened. Come bid me doe any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill *Claudio*.

Bened. Ha, not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it, farewell.

Bened. Tarry sweete *Beatrice*.

Beat. I am gone, though I am here, there is no loue in you, nay I pray you let me go.

Bened. *Beatrice*.

Beat. In faith I will go.

Bened. Weele be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with mee, than fight with mine enemy.

Bened. Is *Claudio* thine enemy ?

Beat. Is a not approoued in the height a villaine, that hath flaundered, scorned, dishonored my kinswoman ? O that I were a man ! what, beare her in hand, vntill they come to take handes, and then with publike accusation vncouerd flaunder, vnmittigated rancour ? O God that I were a man ! I would eate his heart in the market place.

Bened. Heare me *Beatrice*.

Beat. Talke with a man out at a window, a proper saying.

Bened. Nay but *Beatrice*.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Beat. Sweete *Hero*, she is wrongd, she is flaudred, shee is vndone.

Bened. *Beat* ?

Beat. Princes and counties ! surely a princely testimonie, a goodly counte, counte comfekt, a sweete gallant surely, O that I were a man for his sake ! or that I had any friend woulde be a man for my sake ! but manhoode is melted into curfies, valour into complement, and men are only turnd into tongue, and trim ones too : he is now as valiant as *Hercules*, that only tels a lie, and sweares it : I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieuing.

Bened. Tarry good *Beatrice*, by this hand I loue thee.

Beatrice. Vse it for my loue some other way than swearing by it.

Bened. Thinke you in your soule the count *Claudio* hath wrongd *Hero* ?

Beatrice. Yea, as sure as I haue a thought, or a soule.

Bened. Enough, I am engagde, I will challenge him, I will kisse your hand, and so I leaue you : by this hand, *Claudio* shal render me a deere account : as you heare of me, so think of me : goe comforte your coosin, I must say she is dead, and so farewell.

Enter the constables, Borachio, and the towne clearke in gownes.

Keeper. Is our whole dissembly appeard ?

Cowley. O a stoole and a cushion for the sexton.

Sexton. Which be the malefactors ?

Andrew. Mary that am I, and my partner.

Cowley. Nay thats certaine, we haue the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders ? that are to be examined, let them come before maister constable.

Kemp.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Kemp. Yea mary, let them come before mee, what is your name, friend?

Bor. Borachio.

Ke. Pray write downe *Borachio.* Yours firra.

Con. I am a gentleman fir, and my name is *Conrade.*

Ke. Write downe maister gentleman *Conrade* : maisters, do you serue God?

Both. Yea fir we hope.

Kemp. Write downe, that they hope they serue God : and write God first, for God defend but God shoulde goe before such villainies : maisters, it is prooued alreadie that you are little better than false knaues, and it will go neere to be thought so shortly, how answer you for your selues?

Con. Mary fir we say, we are none.

Kemp. A maruellous witty fellowe I assure you, but I will go about with him : come you hither firra, a worde in your eare fir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaues.

Bor. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

Kemp. Wel, stand aside, fore God they are both in a tale : haue you writ downe, that they are none?

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to examine, you must call foorth the watch that are their accusers.

Kemp. Yea mary, thats the efast way, let the watch come forth : maisters, I charge you in the princes name accuse these men.

Watch 1. This man said fir, that don *Iohn* the princes brother was a villaine.

Kemp. Write downe, prince *Iohn* a villaine : why this is flat periurie, to call a princes brother villaine.

Borachio. Maister constable.

Kemp. Pray thee fellowe peace, I doe not like thy looke I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

Watch 2.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Watch 2. Mary that he had receiued a thousand duckats of don *John*, for accusing the ladie *Hero* wrongfully.

Kemp. Flat burglarie as euer was committed.

Const. Yea by masse that it is.

Sexton. What else fellow ?

Watch 1. And that counte *Claudio* did meane vppon his wordes, to disgrace *Hero* before the whole assemblie, and not marrie her.

Kemp. O villaine ! thou wilt be condemnd into euerlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else ?

Watch. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more masters then you can deny, prince *John* is this morning secretlie stolne awaie : *Hero* was in this manner accusde, in this verie manner refusde, and vppon the grieve of this, sodainlie died : maister constable, let these men be bound, and brought to *Leonatoes*, I will goe before and shew him their examination.

Constable. Come, let them be opinioud.

Couley. Let them be in the hands of *Coxcombe*.

Kemp. Gods my life wheres the sexton ? let him write down the princes officer coxcombe : come, bind them, thou naughty varlet.

Couley. Away, your are an asse, you are an asse.

Kemp. Dooft thou not suspect my place ? dooft thou not suspect my yeeres ? O that he were here to write me downe an asse ! but maisters, remember that I am an asse, though it bee not written downe, yet forget not that I am an asse : no thou villaine, thou art full of pietie as shal be prou'de vpon thee by good witnes, I am a wise fellow, and which is more, an officer, and which is more, a housholder, and which is more, as pretty a peece of flesh as anie is in *Messina*, and one that knowes the law, goe to, and a rich fellow enough, go to, and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gownes, and euery thing

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

thing handsome about him : bring him away : O that I bin
writ downe an asse !

Exit.

Enter Leonato and his brother.

Brother. If you go on thus, you will kill your selfe,
And tis not wisedome thus to second griefe,
Against your selfe.

Leonato. I pray thee cease thy counsaile,
Which falles into mine eares as profitlesse,
As water in a syue : giue not me counsaile,
Nor let no comforter delight mine eare,
But such a one whose wrongs doe sute with mine.
Bring me a father that so lou'd his child,
Whose ioy of her is ouer-whelmd like mine,
And bid him speake of patience,
Measure his woe the length and bredth of mine,
And let it answer euery straine for straine,
As thus for thus, and such a griefe for such,
In euery lineament, branch, shape, and forme :
If such a one will smile and stroke his beard,
And sorrow, wagge, crie hem, when he should grone,
Patch griefe with prouerbes, make misfortune drunke,
With candle-wasters : bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience :
But there is no such man, for brother, men
Can counsaile, and speake comfort to that griefe,
Which they themselues not feele, but tasting it,
Their counsaile turnes to passion, which before,
Would giue preceptiall medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madnesse in a filken thred,
Charme ach with ayre, and agony with words,
No, no, tis all mens office, to speake patience
To those that wring vnder the loade of sorrow
But no mans vertue nor sufficiencie

To

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

To be so morall, when he shall endure
The like himselfe : therefore giue me no counsaile,
My griefes crie lowder then aduertisement.

Brother. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leonato. I pray thee peace, I wil be flesh and bloud,
For there was neuer yet philosopher,
That could endure the tooth-ake patiently,
How euer they haue writ the stile of gods,
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

Brother. Yet bend not all the harme vpon your selfe,
Make those that do offend you, suffer too.

Leonato. There thou speakst reason, nay I will do so,
My soule doth tell me, *Hero* is belied,
And that shall *Claudio* know, so shall the prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Prince and Claudio.

Brother. Here comes the prince and *Claudio* hastily.

Prince. Good den, good den.

Claudio. Good day to both of you.

Leonato. Heare you my lords ?

Prince. We haue some haste *Leonato*.

Leonato. Some haste my lord ! well, fare you well my lord,
Are you so hasty now ? wel, all is one.

Prince. Nay do not quarrel with vs, good old man.

Brother. If he could right himselfe with quarrelling,
Some of vs would lie low.

Claudio. Who wrongs him ?

Leona. Mary thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou :
Nay, neuer lay thy hand vpon thy sword,
I feare thee not.

Claudio. Mary beshrew my hand,

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

If it should giue your age such cause of feare,
In faith my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leonato. Tush, tush man, neuer fleere and iest at me,
I speake not like a dotard, nor a foole,
As vnder priuiledge of age to bragge,
What I haue done being yong, or what would doe,
Were I not old, know *Claudio* to thy head,
Thou hast so wrongd mine innocent child and me,
That I am forst to lay my reuerence by,
And with grey haire and bruise of many daies,
Do challenge thee to triall of a man,
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child.
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors :
O in a toomb where neuer scandal slept,
Saue this of hers, framde by thy villanie.

Claudio. My villany ?

Leonato. Thine *Claudio*, thine I say.

Prince. You say not right old man.

Leonato. My lord, my lord,
He prooue it on his body if he dare,
Dispight his nice fence, and his actiue practise,
His *Maie* of youth, and bloome of lustihood.

Claudio. Away, I will not haue to doe with you.

Leonato. Canst thou so daffe me ? thou hast kild my child,
If thou kilst me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

Brother. He shal kill two of vs, and men indeed,
But thats no matter, let him kill one first :
Win me and weare me, let him answer me,
Come follow me boy, come sir boy, come follow me
Sir boy, He whip you from your foyning fence,
Nay, as I am a gentleman I, will.

Leonato. Brother.

Brother. Content your self, God knowes, I loued my neece,
And

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

And she is dead, slanderd to death by villaines,
That dare as well answer a man indeed,
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue,
Boyes, apes, braggarts, *Iackes*, milke-sops.

Leonato. Brother *Anthony*.

Brother. Hold you content, what man! I know them, yea
And what they weigh, euen to the vtmost scruple,
Scambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boies,
That lie, and cogge, and flout, deprauē, and flaunder,
Go antiquely, and shew outward hidiousnesse,
And speake of halfe a dozen dang'rous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst,
And this is all.

Leonato. But brother *Anthonic*.

Brother. Come tis no matter,
Do not you meddle, let me deale in this.

Prince. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience,
My heart is fory for your daughters death :
But on my honour she was chargde with nothing
But what was true, and very full of prooffe.

Leonata. My lord, my lord.

Prince. I will not heare you.

Leo. No come brother away, I will be heard. *Exeunt amb.*

Bro. And shal, or some of vs wil smart for it.

Enter Ben.

Prince. See see, heere comes the man we went to seeke.

Claud. Now signior what news ?

Bened. Good day my lord :

Prince. Welcome signior, you are almost come to parte almost a fray.

Claud. Wee had likt to haue had our two noses snapt off
with two old men without teeth.

Prince.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Prince. *Leonato* and his brother what thinkst thou? had we fought, I doubt we should haue beene too yong for them.

Bened. In a false quarrell there is no true valour, I came to seeke you both.

Claud. We haue beene vp and downe to seeke thee, for we are high prooffe melancholie, and would faine haue it beaten away, wilt thou vse thy wit?

Bened. It is in my scabberd, shal I drawe it?

Prince. Doeſt thou weare thy wit by thy side?

Claud. Neuer any did so, though very many haue been beside their wit, I will bid thee drawe, as wee doe the minstrels, draw to pleasure vs.

Prince. As I am an honest man he lookes pale, art thou sicke, or angry?

Claud. What, courage man: what though care kild a catte, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bened. Sir, I shall meete your wit in the careere, and you charge it against me, I pray you chuse another subiect.

Claud. Nay then giue him another staffe, this last was broke crosse.

Prince. By this light, he chaunges more and more, I thinke he be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knowes how to turne his girdle.

Bened. Shall I speake a word in your eare?

Claud. God blesse me from a challenge.

Bened. You are a villaine, I ieast not, I will make it good howe you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare: doe mee right, or I will protest your cowardise: you haue kild a sweete lady, and her death shall fall heauie on you, let me heare from you.

Claud. Well I wil meet you, so I may haue good cheare.

Prince. What, a feast, a feast?

Claud. I faith I thanke him he hath bid me to a calues head and a capon, the which if I doe not carue most curiously, say my kniffe's naught, shall I not find a woodcocke too?

Bened.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Bened. Sir your wit ambles well, it goes easily.

Prince. Ile tell thee how *Beatrice* praisd thy witte the other day : I said thou hadst a fine witte, true said she, a fine little one : no said I, a great wit : right saies she, a great grosse one : nay said I, a good wit, iust said she, it hurts no body : nay said I, the gentleman is wise : certaine said she, a wise gentleman : nay said I, he hath the tongues : that I beleue said shee, for he swore a thing to mee on *Munday* night, which hee forswore on *Tuesday* morning, theres a double tongue theirs two tongues, thus did shee an houre together trans-shape thy particular vertues, yet at last she cōcluded with a sigh, thou wast the properst man in *Italy*.

Claud. For the which shee wept heartily and saide she cared not.

Prince. Yea that she did, but yet for all that, and if she did not hate him deadly, she would loue him dearely, the old mans daughter told vs all.

Claud. All all, and moreouer, God sawe him when he was hid in the garden.

Prince. But when shall we set the sauage bulles hornes one the sensible *Benedicks* head ?

Claud. Yea and text vnder-neath, here dwells *Benedick* the married man.

Bened. Fare you wel, boy, you know my minde, I will leaue you now to your gossip-like humor, you breake iests as braggards do their blades, which God be thanked hurt not : my lord, for your many courtesies I thanke you, I must discontinue your company, your brother the bastard is fled from *Messina* : you haue among you, kild a sweet and innocent lady : for my lord lacke-beard, there hee and I shal meet, and till then peace be with him.

Prince. He is in earnest.

Claudio. In most profound earnest, and Ile warrant you, for the loue of *Beatrice*.

Prince.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Prince. And hath challengde thee.

Claudio. Most sincerely.

Prince. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his dublet and hose, and leaues off his wit !

Enter constables, Conrade, and Borachio.

Claud. He is then a giant to an ape, but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

Prince. But soft you, let me be, plucke up my heart, and be sad, did he not say my brother was fled ?

Const. Come you sir, if iustice cannot tame you, she shall nere weigh more reasons in her ballance, nay, and you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be lookt to.

Prince. How now, two of my brothers men bound ? *Borachio* one.

Claudio. Hearken after their offence my lord.

Prince. Officers, what offence haue these men done ?

Const. Mary sir, they haue committed false report, moreouer they haue spoken vntruths, secondarily they are slanders, sixt and lastly, they haue belyed a lady, thirdly they haue verified vniust thinges, and to conclude, they are lying knaues.

Prince. First I aske thee what they haue done, thirdly I ask thee whats their offence, sixt and lastly why they are committed, and to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Claud. Rightly reasoned, and in his owne diuision, and by my troth theres one meaning wel futed.

Prince. Who haue you offended maisters, that you are thus bound to your answere ? this learned constable is too cunning to be vnderstood, whats your offence ?

Bor. Sweete prince, let me goe no farther to mine answere : do you heare me, and let this counte kill me : I haue deceiued euen your very eyes : what your wisedoms could not discover, these shallowe fooles haue broght to light, who in the night

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

ouerheard me confessing to this man, how don *Iohn* your brother incensed me to slander the lady *Hero*, howe you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court *Margaret* in *Heroes* garments, how you disgracde hir when you should marry hir: my villany they haue vpon record, which I had rather seale with my death, then repeate ouer to my shame: the lady is dead vpon mine and my masters false accusation: and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villaine.

Prince. Runnes not this speech like yron through your bloud?

Claud. I haue dronke poison whiles he vtterd it.

Prince. But did my brother set thee on to this?

Bor. Yea, and paid me richly for the practise of it.

Prince. He is compofde and framde of treacherie,
And fled he is vpon this villanie.

Clau. Sweet *Hero*, now thy image doth appeare
In the rare semblance that I lou'd it first.

Const. Come, bring away the plaintiffes, by this time our sexton hath reformed signior *Leonato* of the matter: and masters, do not forget to specifie when time and place shal serue, that I am an asse.

Con. 2. Here, here comes master signior *Leonato*, and the sexton too.

Enter Leonato, his brother, and the sexton.

Leonato. Which is the villaine? let me see his eies,
That when I note another man like him,
I may auoide him: which of these is he?

Bor. If you would know your wronger, looke on me.

Leonato. Art thou the slaue that with thy breath hast killd
Mine innocent child?

Bor. Yea, euen I alone.

Leo.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Leo. No, not so villaine, thou beliefst thy selfe,
Here stand a paire of honourable men,
A third is fled that had a hand in it:
I thanke you princes for my daughters death,
Record it with your high and worthy deeds,
Twas brauely done, if you bethinke you of it.

Clau. I know not how to pray your pacience,
Yet I must speake, choose your reuenge your selfe,
Impose me to what penance your inuention
Can lay vpon my sinne, yet sinnd I not,
But in mistaking.

Prince. By my foule nor I,
And yet to satisfie this good old man,
I would bend vnder any heauy waight,
That heele enioyne me to.

Leonato. I cannot bid you bid my daughter liue,
That were impossible, but I pray you both,
Possesse the people in *Messina* here,
How innocent she died, and if your loue
Can labour aught in sad inuention,
Hang her an epitaph vpon her toomb.
And sing it to her bones, sing it to night:
To morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son in law,
Be yet my nephew: my brother hath a daughter.
Almost the copie of my child thats dead,
And she alone is heyre to both of vs,
Giue her the right you should haue giu'n her cosin,
And so dies my reuenge.

Claudio. O noble sir!
Your ouer kindnesse doth wring teares from me,
I do embrace your offer and dispose,
For henceforth of poore *Claudio*.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Leonato. To morrow then I wil expect your comming,
To night I take my leaue, this naughty man
Shal face to face be brought to *Margaret*,
Who I beleuee was packt in al this wrong,
Hyred to it by your brother.

Bor. No by my foule she was not,
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But alwayes hath bin iust and vertuous,
In any thing that I do know by her.

Const. Moreouer sir, which indeede is not vnder white and
blacke, this plaintiffe heere, the offendour, did call me asse,
I beseech you let it be remembred in his punishment, and also
the watch heard them talke of one deformed, they say he
weares a key in his eare and a locke hanging by it, and bo-
rows monie in Gods name, the which he hath vsde so long,
and neuer paied, that now men grow hard hearted and wil lend
nothing for Gods sake : praie you examine him vpon that point.

Leonato. I thanke thee for thy care and honest paines.

Const. Your worship speakes like a most thankful and reue-
rent youth, and I praise God for you.

Leon. Theres for thy paines.

Const. God saue the foundation.

Leon. Goe, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thanke
thee.

Const. I leaue an arrant knaue with your worship, which I
beseech your worship to correct your selfe, for the example of
others : God keepe your worship, I wish your worship well,
God restore you to health, I humblie giue you leaue to depart
and if a merie meeting may be wisht, God prohibite it : come
neighbour.

Leon. Vntill to morrow morning, lords, farewell.

Brot. Farewell my lords, we looke for you to morrow.

Prince. We will not faile.

Claud.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Claud. To night Ile mourne with *Hero*.

Leonato. Bring you these fellows on, weel talke with *Margaret*, how her acquaintance grew with this lewd felow. *exeunt*.

Enter Benedicke and Margaret.

Bened. Praie thee sweete mistress *Margaret*, deserue well at my hands, by helping me to the speech of *Beatrice*.

Mar. Wil you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beautie?

Bene. In so high a stile *Margaret*, that no man liuing shall come ouer it, for in most comely truth thou deseruest it.

Mar. To haue no man come ouer me, why shal I alwaies keep below staires.

Bene. Thy wit is as quicke as the grey-hounds mouth, it catches.

Mar. And your's, as blunt as the fencers foiles, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly witte *Margaret*, it will not hurt a woman: and so I pray thee call *Beatrice*, I giue thee the bucklers.

Marg. Giue vs the swordes, wee haue bucklers of our owne.

Bene. If you vse them *Margaret*, you must putte in the pikes with a vice, and they are daungerous weapons for maides.

Marg. Well, I will call *Beatrice* to you, who I thinke hath legges.

Exit Margarite.

Bene. And therefore wil come. The god of loue that sits aboue, and knowes mee, and knowes me, how pittifull I deserue. I meane in singing, but in louing, *Leander* the good swimmer, *Troilus* the first imploier of pandars, and a whole booke full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

yet runne smoothly in the euen rode of a blanke verse, why they were neuer so truly turnd ouer and ouer as my poore selfe in loue: mary I cannot shew it in rime, I haue tried, I can finde out no rime to ladie but babie, an innocent rime: for scorne, horne, a hard rime: for schoole foole, a babling rime: very ominous endings, no, I was not borne vnder a riming planet, nor I cannot wooe in festiuall termes: sweete *Beatrice* wouldst thou come when I cald thee?

Enter Beatrice.

Beat. Yea signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O stay but till then.

Beat. Then, is spoken: fare you wel now, and yet ere I goe, let me goe with that I came, which is, with knowing what hath past betweene you and *Claudio*.

Bene. Onely foule words, and therevpon I will kisse thee.

Beat. Foule words is but foule wind, and foule wind is but foule breath, and foule breath is noisome, therefore I wil depart vnkist.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sence, so forcible is thy wit, but I must tel thee plainly, *Claudio* vndergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly heare from him, or I will subscribe him a coward, and I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fal in loue with me?

Beat. For them all together, which maintaine so politique a state of euil, that they will not admitte any good part to intermingle with them: but for which of my good parts did you first suffer loue for me?

Bene. Suffer loue! a good epithite, I do suffer loue indeed, for I loue thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart I thinke, alas poore heart, if
you

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

you spight it for my sake, I will spight it for yours, for I will neuer loue that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to wooe peaceably.

Beat. It appeares not in this confession, theres not one wise man among twentie that will praise himselfe.

Bene. An old, an old instance *Beatrice*, that liu'd in the time of good neighbours, if a man do not erect in this age his owne toomb ere he dies, he shall liue no longer in monument, then the bell rings, and the widow weepes.

Beat. And how long is that thinke you?

Bene. Question, why an hower in clamour and a quarter in rhewme, therefore is it most expedient for the wise, if don worme (his conscience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his owne vertues, as I am to my self so much for praising my selfe, who I my selfe will beare witnes is praise worthie, and now tell me, how doth your cosin?

Beat. Verie ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Verie ill too.

Bene. Serue God, loue me, and mend, there wil I leaue you too, for here comes one in hast.

Enter Vrsula.

Vrsula. Madam, you must come to your vncke, yonders old coile at home, it is prooued my lady *Hero* hath bin falsely accusde, the prince and *Claudio* mightily abusde, and don *Iohn* is the author of all, who is fled and gone: will you come presently?

Beat. Will you go heare this newes signior?

Bene. I wil liue in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eies: and moreouer, I wil go with thee to thy vnckles.

Exit.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Enter Claudio, Prince, and three or foure with tapers.

Claudio. Is this the monument of *Leonato*?

Lord. It is my lord.

Epitaph.

Done to death by flauderous tongues,
Was the *Hero* that heere lies :
Death in guerdon of her wronges,
Giues her fame which neuer dies :
So the life that dyed with shame,
Liues in death with glorious fame.
Hang thou there vpon the toomb,
Praising hir when I am dead.

Claudio. Now musick found and sing your solemne hymne.

Song.

Pardon goddesse of the night,
Those that flew thy virgin knight,
For the which with songs of woe,
Round about her tombe they goe :
Midnight assist our mone, help vs to sigh and grone.
Heauily heauily.
Graues yawne and yeeld your dead,
Till death be vttered,
Heauily heauily.

Lo. Now vnto thy bones good night, yeerely will I do this right.

Prince.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Prince. Good morrow maisters, put your torches out,
The wolues haue preied, and looke, the gentle day
Before the wheelles of *Phæbus*, round about
Dapples the drowfie east with spots of grey :
Thanks to you al, and leaue vs, fare you well.

Claudio. Good morrow masters, each his feuerall way.

Prince. Come let vs hence, and put on other weedes,
And then to *Leonatoes* we will goe.

Claudio. And *Hymen* now with luckier issue speeds,
Then this for whom we rendred vp this woe. *Exeunt.*

Enter Leonato, Benedick, Margaret Urfula, *old man*, Frier,
Hero.

Frier. Did I not tell you shee was innocent ?

Leo. So are the prince and *Claudio* who accusd her,
Vpon the errour that you heard debated :
But *Margaret* was in some fault for this,
Although against her will as it appeares,
In the true course of all the question.

Old. Wel, I am glad that all things forts so well.

Bened. And so am I, being else by faith enforst
To call young *Claudio* to a reckoning for it.

Leo. Well daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by your selues,
And when I send for you come hither masked :
The prince and *Claudio* promise by this howre
To visite me, you know your office brother,
You must be father to your brothers daughter,
And giue her to young *Claudio*. *Exeunt ladies.*

Old. Which I will doe with confirmd countenance.

Bened. Frier, I must intreate your paines, I thinke.

Frier. To doe what signior ?

Bened. To bind me, or vndo me, one of them :

Signior

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Signior *Leonato*, truth it is good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of fauour.

Leo. That eye my daughter lent her, tis most true.

Bened. And I do with an eye of loue requite her.

Leo. The sight whereof I thinke you had from me,
From *Claudio* and the prince, but whats your will ?

Bened. Your answere fir is enigmaticall,
But for my wil, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conioynd,
In the state of honorable marriage,
In which (good frier) I shal desire your help.

Leo. My heart is with your liking.

Frier. And my helpe.

Heere comes the prince and *Claudio*.

Enter Prince, and Claudio, and two or three other.

Prince. Good morrow to this faire assembly.

Leo. Good morrow prince, good morrow *Claudio* :
We heere attend you, are you yet determined,
To day to marry with my brothers daughter ?

Claudio. Ile hold my mind were she an *Ethiope*.

Leo. Call her foorth brother, heres the frier ready.

P. Good morrow *Bened.* why whats the matter ?
That you haue such a *Februarie* face,
So full of frost, of storme, and clowdinesse.

Claudio. I thinke he thinkes vpon the sauage bull :
Tush feare not man, wee le tip thy hornes with gold,
And all *Europa* shall reioyce at thee,
As once *Europa* did at lustie *Ioue*,
When he would play the noble beast in loue.

Bened. Bull *Ioue* fir had an amiable lowe,
And some such strange bull leapt your fathers cowe,
And got a calfe in that same noble feate,
Much like to you, for you haue iust his bleate.

Enter

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Enter brother, Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula.

Clau. For this I owe you : here comes other reckonings.
Which is the lady I must seize vpon?

Leo. This same is she, and I do giue you her.

Claud. Why then shees mine, sweet, let me see your face.

Leon. No that you shall not till you take her hand,
Before this frier, and sweare to marry hir.

Claud. Giue me your hand before this holy frier,
I am your husband if you like of me.

Hero. And when I liu'd I was your other wife.
And when you loued, you were my other husband.

Claud. Another *Hero*.

Hero. Nothing certainer,
One *Hero* died defilde, but I do liue,
And surely as I liue, I am a maide.

Prince. The former *Hero*, *Hero* that is dead.

Leon. She died my lord, but whiles her slander liu'd.

Frier. All this amazement can I qualifie,
When after that the holy rites are ended,
Ile tell you largely of faire *Heroes* death,
Meane time let wonder seeme familiar,
And to the chappell let vs presently.

Ben. Soft and faire frier, which is *Beatrice*?

Beat. I answer to that name, what is your will?

Bene. Do not you loue me?

Beat. Why no, no more then reason.

Bene. Why then your vncle, and the prince, and *Claudio*,
Haue beene deceiued, they swore you did.

Beat. Do not you loue me?

Bene. Troth no, no more then reason.

Beat. Why then my cosin *Margaret* and *Ursula*
Are much deceiu'd, for they did sweare you did.

Bene.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Bene. They swore that you were almost sicke for me.

Beat. They swore that you were welnigh dead for me.

Bene. Tis no such matter, then you do not loue me.

Beat. No truly, but in friendly recompence.

Leon. Come cosin, I am sure you loue the gentleman.

Clau. And Ile besworne vpon't, that he loues her,
For heres a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his owne pure braine,
Fashioned to *Beatrice*.

Hero. And heres another,
Writ in my cosins hand, stolne from her pocket,
Containing her affection vnto *Benedicke*.

Bene. A miracle, heres our owne hands against our hearts :
come I will haue thee, but by this light I take thee for pittie.

Beat. I would not denie you, but by this good day, I
yeeld vpon great perswasion, and partly to saue your life, for I
was told, you were in a consumption.

Leon. Peace I will stop your mouth.

Prince. How dost thou *Benedicke* the married man ?

Bene. Ile tel thee what prince : a colledge of witte-crackers
cannot flout me out of my humour, dost thou think I care for a
fatyre or an epigramme ? no, if a man will be beaten with
braines, a shall weare nothing handsome about him : in brieft,
since I doe purpose to marrie, I will think nothing to anie pur-
pose that the world can saie against it, and therefore neuer flout
at me, for what I have said against it : for man is a giddie
thing, and this is my conclusion : for thy part *Claudio*, I did
thinke to haue beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my
kinsman, liue vnbruisde, and loue my cousen.

Clau. I had wel hopte thou wouldst haue denied *Beatrice*,
that I might haue cudgelld thee out of thy single life, to make
thee a double dealer, which out of question thou wilt be, if
my cosin do not looke exceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends, lets haue a dance ere we are maried, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wiues heeles.

Leon. Weele haue dancing afterward.

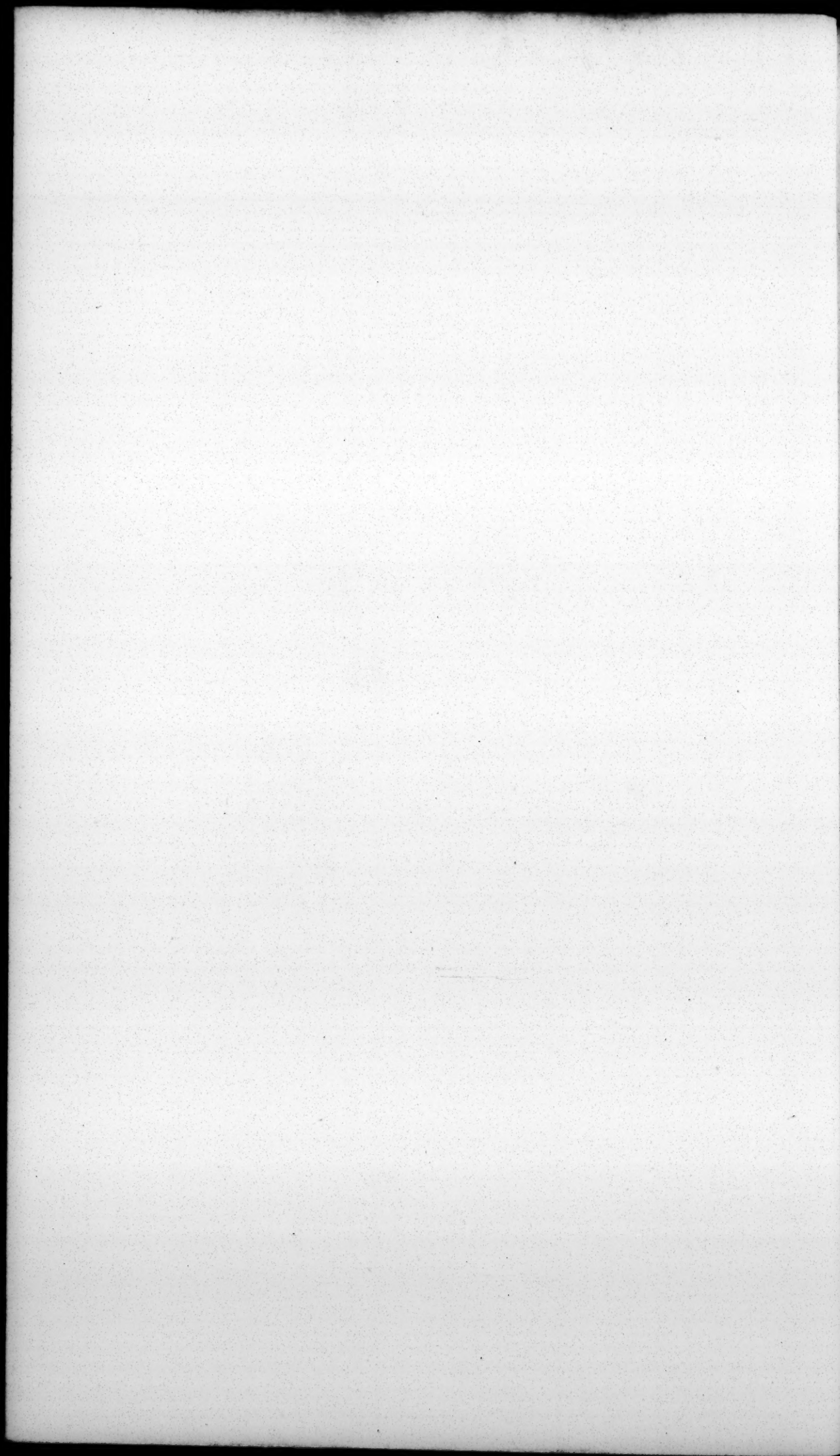
Bene. First, of my worde, therefore plaie musicke, prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife, there is no staffe more reuerent then one tipt with horne.

Enter messenger.

Mess. My lord, your brother *John* is tane in flight,
And brought with armed men backe to *Messina*.

Bene. Thinke not on him till to morrow, Ile deuise thee
braue punishments for him : strike vp pipers. *Dance.*

F I N I S.



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